

The Rabbit Hole of the 1909 Lincoln Wheat Cent

An amateur collector's journey.



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Dedicated to my biggest supporter

My wife

Sarah Tew

And to my children

Without them I would not be here and have the life that I have.

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**THE
RABBIT HOLE
RESEARCH GROUP**



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PREFACE

I began collecting when I was around seven years old after seeing my grandfather's collection. For years I would come and go in the hobby, buying for a brief period and then it would get packed away as life changes came and went. In 2019 I picked it up again. The COVID years of 2020 and 2021 brought on a different aspect of life. More people were limited on where they could go so social media platforms took over and selling became a pastime. When I received a message from Chris Welch in late 2022 I became heavily involved in discovery. Little did I know that after the first time we spoke on the phone the following months would lead to mystery and intrigue and a major discovery. Chris and I began our first chat after realizing that there were four different reverses of 1909. I wrote and published my first article. More chats followed that included Blaine Neupert and Jay Painter. Additional areas for exploration began to emerge for the year 1909. I then discovered the 1910 with a reverse of 1909 that was not supposed to exist and that opened the flood gates of one discovery after another. John Miller, Will Brooks and Thomas Brochu joined the group. From there the journey unfolded. It was not until the pending fifth article that I decided this journey should take book form. My wish is that the following chapters encourage both professionals and amateurs alike to explore and decipher numismatics of the past...even previously unrecognized varieties of a 114-year-old coin can be finally found!

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INTRODUCTION

For over a century the transition of the 1909 United States minor coinage has been studied and written about. Most all written publications base their writing on the documents stored at one of the National Archive locations. Theories and speculations have come and gone, some proven, some not, but in the end, they are all about the same information. The ideas contained in this publication started as theories but then were explored with science and facts. A few individuals helped with this exploration that led to the information presented in these pages. Many publications provide a summary of the story that unfolded in 1909 between the mint, the sculptors, and the public opinion. The intent of this book is to explore the anomalies that are not normally, if ever, explored.

WELCOME TO THE RABBIT HOLE.....

CHAPTER 1

Enter the Rabbit Hole

In this chapter, I intend to summarize material that has previously been reported in multiple publications and in the following chapters, I will present a detailed analysis of each discovery. On June 20, 2023 I flew to the Atlanta Archives to continue research on the Lincoln Cent. I discovered that these archives contained Assay Files from the Charlotte Mint (the first United States mint), which specialized in gold coinage. These files were not useful for my research, so I changed directions and on June 21, 2023, I flew to visit the archives in College Park in Maryland. To my dismay many files requested from these archives in College Park were missing the years 1909-1910. However, three files contained cross copied letters and correspondence pertinent to this timeline. The following letters are in chronological order of what was found in those files.

In a letter dated January 4, 1909 Brenner writes to Director Leach:

“When I had the pleasure of being with you, I forgot to ask what amount St. Gaudens received for his models of the Eagle half and what Mr. Pratt got for his.

I was thinking of embodying the portrait of Mr. Lincoln in the cent piece and find that it will compose well.

With the season's best wishes,

Victor Brenner" ^[1]

Brenner contacts Director Leach again on January 6, 1909:

"Many thanks to your letter of yesterday. I am glad to say that the President has a copy of my Lincoln medal and likes it very much.

On several occasions I noticed the keen sense of art this president has and feel that with your appreciation and his will arrive to have a set of coins that will be a pleasure to all"

I am yours very respectfully,

Victor D. Benner" ^[2]

Subsequent letters consist of arranging for the models to go before the president for approval by Lincoln's birthday of February 22 and requesting again the former engravers' price for their work. Brenner mentions he would rather see his work on the half dollar and felt it would showcase his work in better detail which Director Leach denies. Brenner is asked to provide his bid and if accepted he will receive the commission for the new cent. Brenner submits a price of 1200 dollars for two sets, 1000 for the first and 200 for the second.

[1], [2] Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104 (U.S. Mint), Entry 328-1, Office of the Director Central Files, (Case on U.S. Coins [Central File], 1874-1978) 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

This is where things begin to get interesting and tie into the physical discoveries found by The Rabbit Hole Research Group. In a letter sent to Brenner dated February 3, 1909:

“My Dear Mr. Brenner,

*Your letter of the 3rd received. If I understand you correctly, you offer to supply the government with one set of models to be used for the penny coin, embracing the bust of Lincoln for the obverse and the design sent here for the reverse, for the sum of one thousand dollars. If this is true, your offer is accepted, **with the understanding that these models shall be altered so as to suit the requirements of the statutes and the coinage operations** (emphasis added). I would prefer that you come down here so that I can explain what is necessary to be done. It would be very difficult to do this through correspondence. The government will pay your transportation and subsistence expenses while making this visit to Washington. I would like to have you here by next Monday forenoon.*

Your truly,

Frank A. Leach

Director of the Mint” [3]

[3] Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104 (U.S. Mint), Entry 328-1, Office of the Director Central Files, (Case on U.S. Coins [Central File], 1874-1978) 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

The line in bold becomes a disclaimer for the Mint to make any necessary changes to the die for the Mint to produce a coin profitable to the government.

The White House sends a letter to Director Leach on February 4, 1909:

"My dear Director Leach,

The President understands that Brenner's design is to be used for the penny. Is this correct? Please return the enclosed letter from Brenner with your reply.

Very truly yours,

Will. Loeb" ^[4]

February 6, 1909 Brenner is requested to visit the Mint for a conference with the Director relative to preparing a new design for the one cent bronze piece. Interestingly enough Barber sends a letter to Leach on the same day:

"Sir,

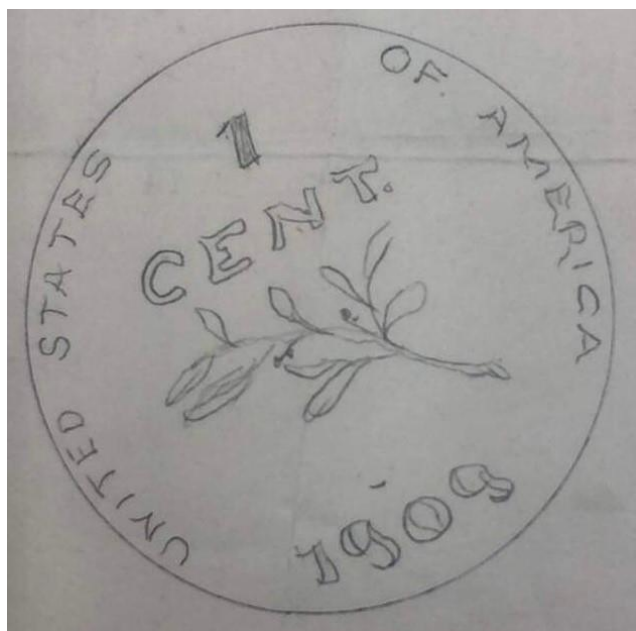
I find upon coming to my office this morning that the one cent dies are both on the radius 25 when soft. This may be of use to you when you see Brenner.

[4] Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104 (U.S. Mint), Entry 328-1, Office of the Director Central Files, (Case on U.S. Coins [Central File], 1874-1978) 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

Respectfully,

Charles E. Barber ENGRAVER” [5]

In this letter, Barber is referring to the Indian Head Cent and wants to use it as a guideline for Brenner to follow since it has been working in



Brenner's first reverse design submitted

decision making as Brenner tries to introduce a second reverse. The first reverse depicted a design like the France two franc piece and the second now with a female figure.

In studying the hand drawn images we can see where Brenner's artistic style transfers to

the Mint presses. He frequently refers to Brenner's design having a radius of six and consequently would not work properly.

Frank Leach sends correspondence to the Treasury Department on February 9th voicing his dislike for Brenner's



Brenner's second reverse design submitted

his final work especially in the structure of his T's where the right side of

[5] Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104 (U.S. Mint), Entry 328-1, Office of the Director Central Files, (Case on U.S. Coins [Central File], 1874-1978) 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

the crossbar is thicker than the left. His artistic style also shows on the inside of his E's which have a curvature of the corners unlike the style of engraver Charles Barber who preferred sharp, square corners. These design variations will be reflected in relevant differences of detail that will be presented in the coming chapters.

It is obvious in letters between Barber and Brenner that Barber has a certain distaste for him. With the lack of knowledge of the minting process against him, Brenner continues to submit ideas and models that just will not work to Barber's satisfaction. This is painfully apparent in a letter dated February 13, 1909:

"Dear Mr. Brenner,

Your letter of the 10th instant received, and the contents have been discussed with the Director who I understand has given you certain instructions regarding the design.

Mr. Leach tells me that he has explained to you that he desired the field of coin to be finished with affixed radius or curve, therefore the model must be made with affixed radius.

*I find in you[r] Lincoln medal that the field in front of the face is one plane while the field at the back of the head is an entirely different plane, this you will see **will never do as we have to finish the field of the dies***

mechanically in order to comply with the wish of the Director (emphasis added), namely, to have the field finished smooth and one radius.

In making your design you must avoid as much as possible one bold part of your design coming opposite another on the other side of the coin, as that would be fatal to the coining of the piece.

In regard to what relief you had better adopt I am sorry to say that I cannot give you any fixed instructions as so much depends upon the design of both sides and the particular metal the design is for, also the area of the coin.

You can look at the cent, judge from that, and that is the extent of the relief that can be successfully used for the one cent coin, and you will also see that from the point of utility, that the design is good, as it is so arranged that no[t] one point comes in opposition to another, and as these coins are struck by tons every year, not thousands, but millions and if the usual average dies was not produced, the Coiner would condemn the dies at once.

In designing for a coin you must give due weight to the mechanical requirements of coinage and remember that great quantities of coin are demanded against time, and therefore, everything that can be done to simplify both the making of the dies and the production of the coin, must be considered.

You also know that the coins drop from the press at the rate of 120 per minute and that unlike a medal there is no bronzing or finishing of any description, no chance to bring out your design by coloring, it comes from the press one color and that the color of the metal whatever that may be.

Sincerely yours,

Chas. E. Barber” [6]

February 18th another letter is sent to Brenner from Leach requesting another change to the design and that of the V being used instead of the U in every instance in his models and the models are shipped back for the change. Brenner is also informed on the nineteenth that any models or molds become government property once accepted. Brenner returns correspondence to the same acknowledging the surrender of his work once completed.

As work approached the end of February Brenner does request to see the Hubs before they are hardened to do any retouching he sees necessary under the supervision of Barber. At the same time Leach is not impressed that Brenner continues to insist that his last name appear in full at the bottom of the reverse and suggests that only the initials be allowed. With Barber placing an initial B on the coins he has created, the

[6] Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104 (U.S. Mint), Entry 328-1, Office of the Director Central Files, (Case on U.S. Coins [Central File], 1874-1978) 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

only option left was to use Brenner's three initials to insure distinction between the two artists.

It is now the first week in March and Barber has received the plaster casts. The requested physical changes have been made yet the manufacturing changes Barber needs, and has suggested in the past, have been ignored. He sends a letter to Landis explaining the manufacturing obstacles that are in his way. Barber sees production issues in creating hubs of both sides and conveys his concerns that what he is given will still have too many issues to even consider moving forward.

This type of correspondence continues throughout March and into June. On June 3, 1909 a letter is sent to the Superintendent of the Mint from Leach:

"Sir:

I am pleased to acknowledge the receipt of the 25 samples of the one cent piece from the new design which are highly satisfactory, and you are hereby authorized to proceed with the coinage of the same. Utmost care must be taken that no samples of this coin are allowed to get out. You will proceed with the coinage, without making any distribution of the same, until you are otherwise notified from this office.

As soon as convenient, I will thank you to prepare cent dies of the new design for use at the San Francisco Mint and forward the same as soon as they are ready.”^[7]

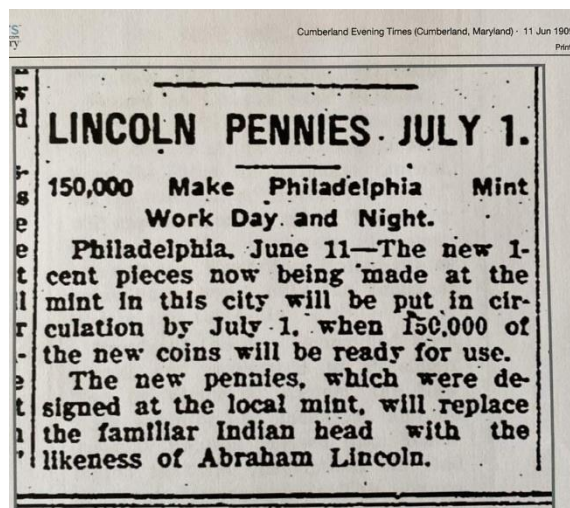
It was not until July 9th that a telegram from acting Director Preston was sent to the Philadelphia Mint requesting that five sets of dies of the new cent design be sent to the San Francisco Mint.

[7] NARA Record Group 104, Finding Aid: NC-152 Entry 235, Volume II Department of the Treasury Bureau of the Mint Letter Sent 1873-1938, A2:00450:66/027/03-066/033/05

CHAPTER 2

The Silent Winds of Change

Although the green light to start production was June 3rd, the first mention to the public that production had started on the new Lincoln cent does not appear until June 11th in a local newspaper, The Cumberland Evening Times. The Coiner Ledger from the Philadelphia Mint shows its first entry June 30, 1909 with 20,000,000 of the Lincoln Design. It was not until July 15, 1909 that an official White House approval was announced by Secretary MacVeagh.



June 11, 1909 local newspaper clipping

Our study of coins in the acquired Bloom Hoard (covered in depth in Chapter 12) has revealed that multiple variants were already present on the dies available for use before the release on August 2, 1909.

A letter sent by Acting Superintendent Albert Norris on May 22, 1909 to the Director of the Mint states:

“This letter states that you have received but four specimens of the proposed new coin. I enclose in my letter six specimens, four of the modified new die and two from the dies made by Mr. Brenner.”^[8]

The RHRG (Rabbit Hole Research Group) found samples of multiple versions of the 1909 Cent. The original Brenner reverse had thicker letters and the edges were rounded. To solve minting and die making issues those letters were made thinner. Thinner letters did not work as hoped so a new reverse was made. Though no specific mention of this

[8] Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104 (U.S. Mint), Entry 328-1, Office of the Director Central Files, (Case on U.S. Coins [Central File], 1874-1978) 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

new reverse has been found in correspondence records, it can be found on the Type two reverse as seen in Chapter 3. Through analysis it can be determined that Barber was the one who created this reverse by its exhibiting his engraving style. The letters are squared off. The T's are symmetrical and not like Brenner's as are the insides of the A and R. Since Barber could not identify his work, he did so in a way only he would know. He dropped the E of AMERICA slightly and the B of the initials is the same as the one he uses on his own designs. These changes are covered in detail throughout the following chapters.

Barber keeps what he has done to himself until he reveals what he did to make the new cent work in a letter dated August 13, 1909:

"Hon. John H. Landis,

Superintendent

Sir:

In compliance with your request to make the new one cent the same thickness as the old I beg to state that I have made such changes as can be readily made without an entire reconstruction of the model.

If it was desired that the new coin was to conform to all the conditions of the old coin it should have been so arranged and stipulated with the designer, as it is placing this department to great disadvantage to accept a model from an artist who never has modelled for coinage and knows absolutely nothing of the process of coinage and then insist that this department shall make dies that shall answer all Mint conditions, even to the thickness of the piece when struck.

Independent of the fact that the model was made without any thought of this requirement, the change that takes place in hardening

may be sufficient to create a difference in the convexity of the die which will show when the pieces are gauged in slot machines, or piled fifteen or twenty high, and are we to sacrifice the appearance of the coin or limit our production to satisfy the manufacturers and vendors of slot machines, I think not, although **if the change I have already made** (emphasis added) does not conform to these machines, the only possible thing to do is to **remodel the design and alter it** (emphasis added), that it will at least satisfy the slot machine manufacturers , although it may not be satisfactory to anyone else.

The change I have made may interfere with the average number of pieces per pair of dies that the Coiner expects and is almost necessary when the demand for one cent pieces is great, but it is the only change that can be made without as I have already said an entire reconstruction of the model. (emphasis added)

The relief of the Lincoln head is so great that in order to protect it from abrasion the border must be higher than the highest point of the head and consequently to make both sides of the coin alike the reverse border must be high also and these two borders regulate the thickness of the coin. You will therefore see the difficulty is twofold, first if the borders are not the same height the two sides of the coin will differ, one from the other and the mechanical difficulty is, that the borders not being equal the strain on the lowest border is too great and the die cracks before a proper average of pieces is obtained. **The change I have made does not reduce the thickness of the piece** (emphasis added) to the same thickness of the old coin which I do not hesitate to say cannot be done without new models and even then it will only be an experiment as the designs are so entirely different that it is impossible for anyone to say how the metal will be swallowed up by the design, and the law regulates

*the diameter and weight of the piece we have no remedy in that direction and **therefore I earnestly advise that the change I have made be accepted as final** (emphasis added) unless, it proves to reduce our production in which case there is nothing to do but return to our present hub.*

Respectfully,

Chas. E. Barber

Engraver”^[9]

To verify claims made in this letter Blaine Neupert stacked twenty 1909 Lincoln cents, a column of the Type One originals, a column of Type One with the thinner reverse letters and a column of Type two. It is noted that both Type One reverses were equal height, while the Type Two reverse lost the equivalent of the thickness of one coin.



Type One (thick letters), Type One (thin letters), Type Two

In Chapter 8 the difference between Type One and Type Two dies is explored more deeply with microtomography and 3D scanning.

Facing a strong demand for the new cent along with the need to find a design solution that works, time is not on the Mint’s side to produce sufficient coins to meet the public needs. A decision needed to be reached on creating dies that work, but what to do with the dies that do not work? Since materials and labor were limited, it is reasonable to

[9] Records of the U.S. Mint, Record Group 104 (U.S. Mint), Entry 328-1, Office of the Director Central Files, (Case on U.S. Coins [Central File], 1874-1978) 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

assume that a plan was made to repurpose the Type One dies and convert them. What would be easier than annealing the die and hubbing the Type Two onto the die face (see Chapter Three)? To the naked eye no one would notice. We already know Barber had made many changes over the past four months and did so without consultation. So what would stop the die room from saving time and materials to speed up production, but to repurpose what they already had.

This option was not discovered for another ninety five years when the 1909 reverses, which had been categorized as Lathe reduction skipping, were finally recognized and attributed as Class III Doubled Die reverses, better described as both reverses on the same working die. It was not until the Rabbit Hole Research Group was formed in 2023 that multiple Class III Doubled Die 1909 reverses received recognition.

Many other questions formed as studying this transition year continued. One of those questions concerned the change in the appearance of the initials



Two sets of initials on top of each other

where at first glance the reverse strike appears like mechanical doubling but upon further inspection it is two sets of different initials one by Brenner and one by Barber. Notice the periods do not double ruling out machine doubling.



There is also the removal of the initials in August. How many dies were modified waiting for new dies to be created? The Coiner Ledger shows entries from June 30th to August 6th, 1909 of 27,995,000 with initials and the next entry is August 13, 1909 of 2,000,000 without initials. Although specimens have been noted as possible dies appearing to be modified with the initials removed there have yet to be any recognized by a grading company.

Only time will tell what else will be discovered. The following chapters take a closer look into each of the discoveries made.

CHAPTER 3

THE MYSTERY OF THE TWO 1909 REVERSES

We all know the story behind the transitional year of 1909 when the minor coinage of the cent went from the well-known Indian Head Cent to the Lincoln Wheat Cent. What is less well known about the Wheat Cent is there are actually two distinct reverses that were struck. The first is referred to as Type 1 that shows a filled in N in UNITED and an evenly aligned E in AMERICA. The second is referred to as Type 2 that shows a cleaner, deeper cut N in UNITED and a lowered E in AMERICA.



The question that arises is: when and why were two reverses used? Roger Burdette, in his book *Renaissance of American Coinage 1909-1915* cites a letter from Barber to superintendent Landis stating his concerns with the reduction radius of the provided molds.

"The next question before me is the reverse. While there appears to have been made an effort to establish a fixed radius to this side, it has the objection of being too round [i.e., convex], as you will see. The model so far as I am able to ascertain has a radius of sixty and the reduction will be about ten or one tenth that of the model, this will bring the first

reduction to a radius of six, and by the time the dies are made and tempered they will be still rounder, or something less than six. Our one cent dies finish at twenty-five radius.” ^[10]

With the voiced concerns from Barber about the radius, a second Galvano was made possibly to correct the striking and radius issues that the first one was causing. It appears that the first reverse did go into production for a short amount of time at the beginning of production in June. The need to address these issues explains why a second reverse was created and both end up in production.

Also mentioned in the correspondence reported by Burdette, was the change from Brenner’s last name that was spelled out at the bottom of the reverse. This was later removed and replaced with initials. On the second reverse made by Barber, he does the same but with a slight difference in results. On the Type One reverse the period between D and B is centered and with the Type Two reverse the period is off centered between those two initials.



Type 1



Type 2

[10] Burdette, Roger (2007) Renaissance of American Coinage 1909-1915 pg.41 paragraph 5



Type 1 with
beveled
edge



Type 2 with
Rounded
edge

The second reverse had slight changes made to it but most importantly the structure of the letters was changed. They went from rounded corners and beveled sides on the first reverse to square corners and rounded edges on the second.

Early in the production year, Class III Doubled Dies appear. These reverses show the hubbing of the second reverse on top of the first. This was most likely an attempt to correct production issues and utilize dies already made, instead of starting completely over. The Class III Doubled Dies were not only used for business strike dies but also for proof reverse dies as seen on coppercoins.com 1909P-1DR-008P.

This Class III Doubled Die was also used in the 1910 production year as there are now eight confirmed specimens. This 1909 Class III Doubled Die reverse has not been previously recognized on 1910



cents. The first specimen was located on March 19, 2023, the second hours later and the third verified April 1, 2023. The first specimen was sent to Dr. Wiles for attribution. On May 1, 2023, Dr. Wiles reported his findings on his site, Variety Vista. This 1910 cent is now listed as VDDR-001, 1-R-III, stage B, EMDS Transitional. There are 1909 S and 1909 S/S minted coins that have the same type Class III Doubled Die reverse. This opens the possibility that this same type reverse may be found for other years and mints. I have found that AU to MS samples tend to be the only reverses that one can easily verify.

With an original group of mint coins acquired, reverse types were counted for an estimate of ratios. The Bloom Hoard (covered more in Chapter Twelve) was purchased shortly after the release of the cent in August of 1909 and immediately put into a safe deposit box where they remained for over a century. Of the 332 cents in this group 104 were first reverse (31%), 13 were Class III Doubled Die reverse (4%) and the remaining 215 were the second reverse (65%).



We do note that the Class III Doubled Die reverse happened before the August release as the samples currently in possession have the initials minted on them

CHAPTER 4

The Four Master Hubs of the 1909 Lincoln Wheat Cent Transition

Major elements of this chapter appeared as published articles and some of the terminology will not match the already discovered and written about reverse differences but was done for personal reasons and tracking during this journey. Since its publication, additional documentation has been accessed and is included here.

A collaborative case study by Shawn Tew of Michigan and Chris Welch of Oregon resulted in the conclusion that there were in fact two separate Galvanos and four different master hubs created for the 1909 transitional year of the Lincoln Wheat cent.

We compared the reverses of the wheat cent before and after the removal of the sculptor's initials to determine if there was a difference between the two. There are in fact references showing two different reverses, but the second reverse is referred to as the reverse of 1910. Evidence shows that this is not the case.

For illustration purposes we have identified the reverses of the 4 Master Hubs as RDV-01a (RDV-001), RDV-01b (RDV-002), RDV-02a (RDV-003) and RDV-02b (RDV-004) [Variety Vista reverse attributions are included in parenthesis].

On or around March of 1909, The Numismatist announced the coming arrival of Brenner's new Lincoln design. The first reverse Galvano was created. With issues in production slight changes were made to the master die to try to fix them. This permission is granted By Brenner to Barber in a letter dated March 27, 1909:

“If it pleases you, you need not send me the die for the reverse for retouching, as there need only a few lines rectified. Please suit yourself about that.” [11]



RDV-01a



RDV-2a

For an unconfirmed reason a second Galvano was created. We know this because RDV-02a exhibits subtle changes from RDV-01a. The resulting master hub was used to continue production of the 1909 VDB but NOT the 1909s VDB since that mintage is ended resulting in 484,000 coins.

These subtle changes are most notable by comparing the N in UNITED and the E in AMERICA (there are many more minor differences but two were selected that are easily distinguishable from one version to the next). RDV-01a shows the N with a shallow cut by the right leg whereas the N on RDV-02a has a deeper cut. In comparing the E, RDV-01a is level with the feet of the M and R whereas RDV-02a the E is slightly lower than the feet of the M and the R. We also can determine that RDV-01a was from the first Galvano because all four issues of 1909 present this reverse whereas only the 1909VDB, 1909 and 1909S present RDV-

[11] Records of the U.S. Mint, Office of the Director Central Files, Case on U.S. Coins 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

02a. This meant a second Galvano had to be created for these changes to appear consistent on RDV-02a.



RDV-01a



RDV-02a

On August 5, 1909, due to public outcry over the presence of Brenner's initials, Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh stopped the minting process with a mintage of 27,995,000 1909 VDB coins. MacVeagh then had Brenner's initials removed from the hubs and had new dies made. Initials would need to be removed from the Type One and Type Two hubs in such a way that no trace would be noticeable whether that be abrasions, gouges or over polishing and new dies made.

In a letter from Charles Norton, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, to Secretary MacVeagh he writes:

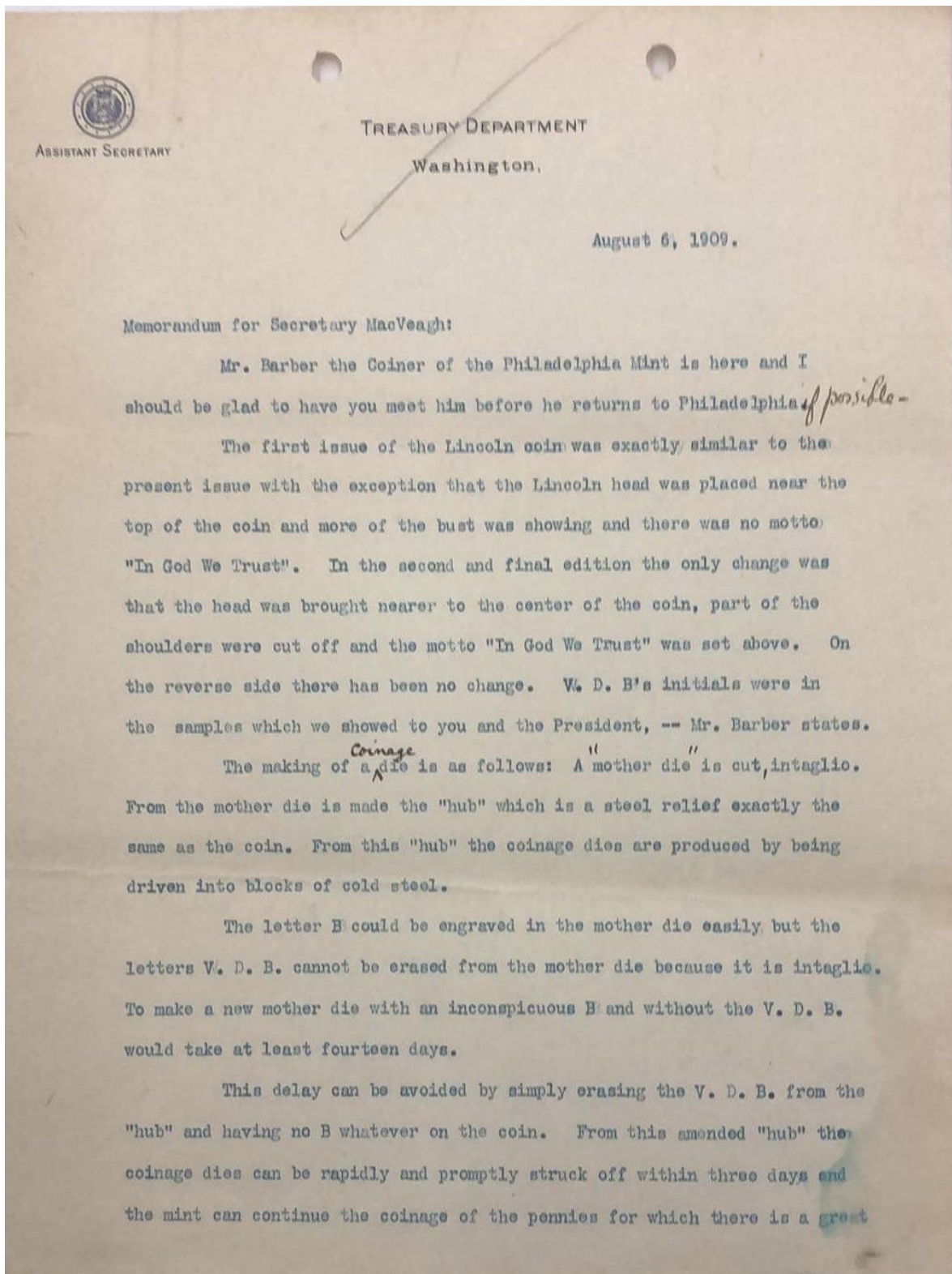


Image from the Records of the U.S. Mint, Office of the Director Central Files, Case on U.S. Coins 104-83-0042 box 1, NN3-104-91-002

demand (and in which there is a great profit to the government)

Mr. Barber favors cutting off the initials and leaving them off the coin entirely. This is not unusual as there are no initials on the five-cent piece and formerly there were no initials on the Eagle, Half-Eagle or Quarter-Eagle. On the other hand it is not unusual to have an initial show on a coin. St. Gauden's initials appear on the gold pieces, Pratt's on the Half-Eagle and Quarter-Eagle, etc. I have before me a French five-franc piece coined in 1870 on which Barré's full name appears. On another piece coined in 1831, the name E. A. Oudine appears. An Italian ²⁰centime ^{piece} bears the full name of both the Engraver and Designer.

There are two reasons why Mr. Barber favors erasing the initials from the new penny; First, because it involves a delay of only three days in coining operations instead of a delay of about ~~four~~teen days. Second, because if the B is placed in an inconspicuous place, he fears that it may be confused with the B which now appears on the half-dollar which was engraved by himself. He is not willing to be held personally responsible for the Lincoln penny which he has always opposed and does not regard as a successful coin.

Shall we take fourteen days and insert a small B in an inconspicuous place, or three days and elide the initials entirely? If the former, what is the inconspicuous place? Mr. Barber states that it is very difficult to place it on the Lincoln shoulder inconspicuously because the bust comes to the edge of the coin. On the reverse side he thought that he had found the least conspicuous place for the initials which he regarded as very small, but the American newspaper reporters have made it very clear that the place was by no means inconspicuous and the initials were by no means small.

B.D.N.

There have been claims that initials were removed from dies and ghost initials were left in their place. This theory states that if a change had been on the hub or working die there would be evidence on the coin fields that would be noticed by graders thru the discovery of any abrasions, die gouges or over polishing. However, to this day not one sample has been certified by a TPG to substantiate that claim. Additionally, removal of the initials from the working dies is not even an option under consideration in the letter (above) from Charles Norton, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.



RDV-01b



RDV-02b

The research also shows that there never was a 1910 reverse used for the 1909 production but in fact it was the creation of the second Galvano that carried the design to the following years. Somewhere along the making of the master hubs the first Galvano was removed from production and was not used for the remainder of the Lincoln Wheat series.

In all there are a total of 7 coins accounted for the 1909 Lincoln Wheat series:

1909 VDB – RDV-01a and RDV-02a



1909S VDB – RDV-01a (production ceased)



1909 – RDV-01b and RDV-02b



1909s – RDV-01b and RDV-02b



That there are two versions of the VDB reverse shows that a second Galvano was made. There are no records in either the 1909 or 1910 Annual Reports of the Mint Director showing the cost for the second Galvano or why it was produced. There are also no records showing the cost of removing the initials. In the 1910 Annual report which covers June 30, 1909 - June 30, 1910, we see there were 1621 dies made for the Philadelphia Mint and 110 for San Francisco, totaling 1731 dies and a total 1909 mintage of 103,006,618 minor coins minted. This amount breaks down to a die life of 59,507 strikes per die. The report for 1911 covering June 30, 1910, to June 30, 1911, shows 775 dies made for the Philadelphia Mint and 110 for San Francisco, totaling 885 dies and a total of 1910 mintage of 152,846,218 minor coins minted. This breaks down to a die life of 172,707 strikes per die. All Dies were made at the Philadelphia Mint engraving department.

CHAPTER 5

Discovery of the 1910 Reverse of 1909 Class III DDR

A 1910 Lincoln Wheat Cent with a reverse of a 1909 thought to be discontinued at the end of the 1909 production run was discovered by Shawn Tew of Lansing, MI. The discovery happened March 19, 2023, while Tew was searching eBay for the possibility of a 1909 first reverse being accidentally used in 1910. There has always been speculation of a reverse with ghost initials possibly being used in 1910. Even specimens with slight tooling have been sought after but no TPG service has yet certified a single sample. When Tew spotted the reverse and confirmed it was a 1909 reverse he quickly placed the buy it now asking price. Tew then presented it to a small group he had worked with on The Four Master Hubs of the 1909 Lincoln Wheat Cent Transition article.

Jay Painter of Ionia, MI (also within the group) immediately went searching and was able to find a second specimen by matching the three die cracks present on the reverse as well as the die crack on the obverse. The first die crack is located just above K9, the second at K6 and the third at K4 that enters the wheat stalk and curves towards K3. The obverse die crack is located at the bottom of the bust at K8.

The T and E in United on the reverse of the 1910 is like the 1909 Matte Proof images on Coppercoins.com. This is not a claim that the same die was used but that it was also a Class III hubbing, using the same hubs. Coppercoins has this Class III doubled Die reverse listed as 1909P-1DR-005, 1909P-1DR-006 and 1909P-1DR-008P (this is found on the reverse of the matte proof). Only the 1909P-1DR-006 has an attributed number as CONECA DDR-003. Variety Vista has the 1909P-1DR-006 reverse listed as RDV-003. I have this marked in my files as RDV-02B.

Coppercoins mentions the use of both reverses to make up the 1909P-1DR-008P. We were able to confirm that using software and images of both reverses lined on top of each other and they are a direct match to 008P.



Close up of the 1909 Class III Doubled Die reverse.

Both Tew and Painter along with Blaine Neupert continued their search for additional specimens and have acquired three more specimens to date, making five in total. A search was initiated for a 1910 DDR attributed or recorded and no records were found making this a discovery coin. Most likely this was the accidental use of an old working die from 1909 that was put into production and didn't last long as we see from the multiple cracks forming. With this Class III DDR appearing on both V.D.B. and non V.D.B. versions and the die room making 1621 dies at the Philadelphia Mint that year there was bound to be a die accidentally used in the following year.



1910 obverse with the 1909 Class III Doubled Die reverse



The most obvious letters of the Class III Doubled Die reverse.





Four known die cracks of the 1910 die pair.

On May 1, 2023, Dr. Wiles attributed the 1910 as a new Variety Vista listing, 1910 VDDR-001, 1-R-III, stage B, EMDS Transitional. This chapter also appeared in article form in June 2023 in The Numismatist on page 34. At the time of this book publication only ten examples were known to exist.

CHAPTER 6

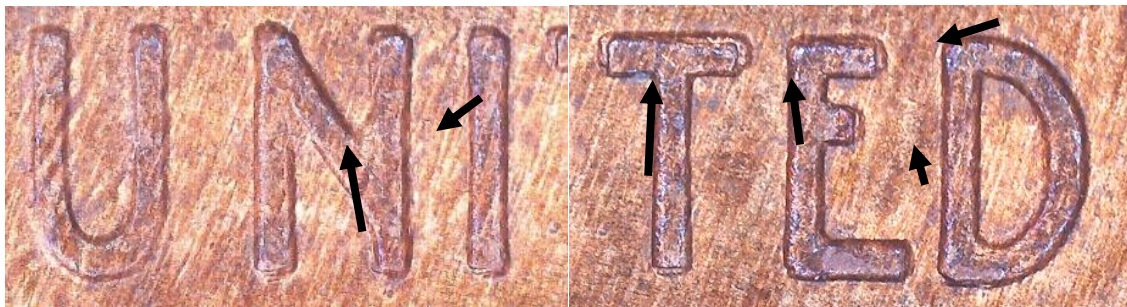
The Class III DDR of 1909

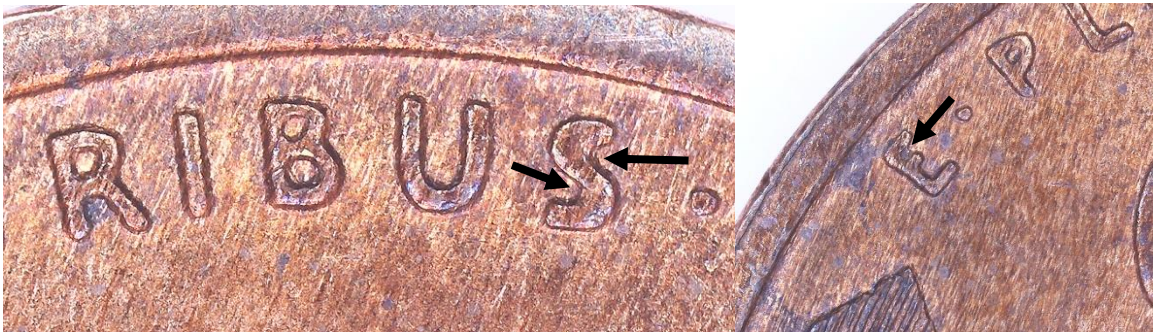
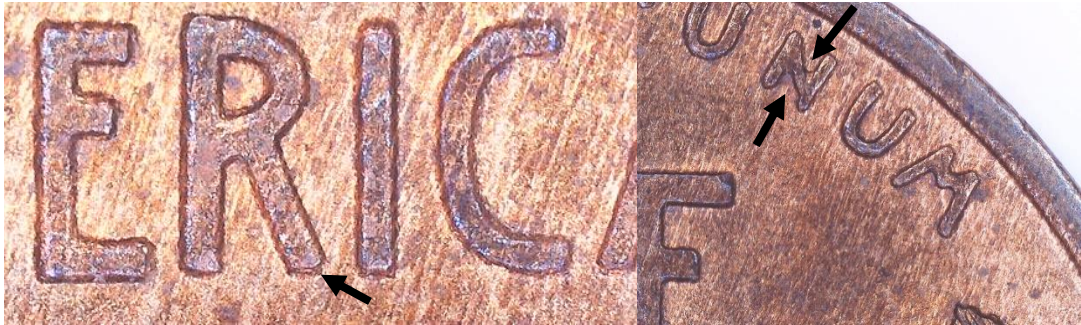
The 1909 Class III Doubled Die reverse was heavily studied by Blaine Neupert of Cottage Grove, WI while assisting with the Four Master Hubs of the 1909 Lincoln Wheat Cent Transition paper written by Shawn Tew with the assistance of Chris Welch. During the process of identifying each reverse, it was noticed that the doubling had many common features with those reported on Coppercoins.com., especially the reverse referred to as 1909P-1DR-008P. With Neupert's vast quantities of MS samples, he was able to locate this Class III Doubled Die reverse on the 1909P VDB, 1909P (EDS, MDS, LDS) ,1909S and the 1909 S/S. Neupert began doing overlays of his coins to see how they changed from one doubling to the next. Neupert was able to determine that these were not only separate doubled dies but also in different stages.

It was determined that during the hubbing of a working die, the working hub from the second Galvano was hubbed over the hubbing from the working hub from the first Galvano (only used in 1909), creating what later is recognized as Class III hub doubling. Neupert took a clean image of both reverses and superimposed the second on top of the first, recreating the exact image of this Class III Doubled Die reverse. Comparing other listings of 1909 DDRs, Neupert was able to see not only different DDRs but different die stages of the same DDR. This reverse became what we called the Transitional Reverse. It was easily identified by the partially filled in N of UNITED and the small T on top of the large T, also in UNITED. This Transitional N is what was used to find and authenticate the 1910 reverse of 1909 discovered by Shawn Tew. Multiple working dies were created using this method. This process

would have also been used to create the Matte Proof working die that year as they show the same characteristics.

Below are images from Neupert's personal collection of what to look for when searching for the Class III Doubled Die reverse.







Blaine Neupert's vast collection includes an original hoard of over 300 MS cents in a mint bag that was stored in a safety deposit box since it was purchased in 1909. It has been invaluable for his assistance with the research. More on this Bloom Hoard is covered in Chapter 12.



CHAPTER 7

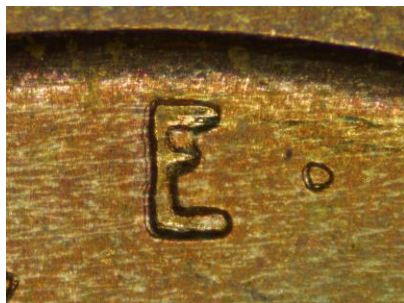
The 1909 Reverse Comparison Chart For

Type 1, Type 2, and Class III DDR Reverses

In comparing the Type 1 and Type 2 reverses you will notice that Type 1 will have rounded finished edges on both exterior and interior right angles. Type 2 will have crisper right angles on the exterior and interior right angles. Type 1 will have fewer detailed peaks and valleys in the N's and M's while Type 2 has sharper ones. Type 1 has a level T in UNITED and Type 2 has been shortened. Type 1 had larger openings in each A and the Type 2 openings are smaller. The E in AMERICA will be level in Type 1 and lowered in Type 2.

In verifying the Class III DDR reverse you will notice the characteristics of Type 2 hubbed on top of Type 1. This is most noticeable in the T and E in UNITED. This diagnostic covers 1909, 1909 VDB, 1909 S, 1909 S/S, 1909 Matte Proof and the 1910 in VEDS, EDS, MDS and LDS.

TYPE 1



CLASS III DDR



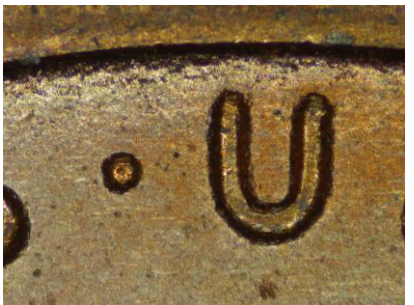
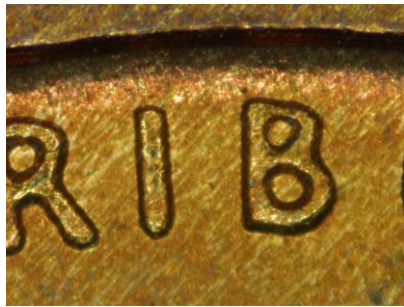
TYPE 2



TYPE 1

CLASS III DDR

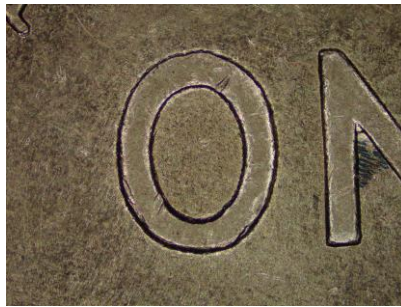
TYPE 2



TYPE 1

CLASS III DDR

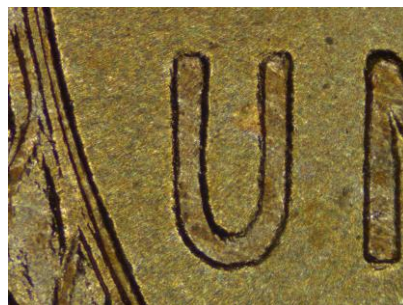
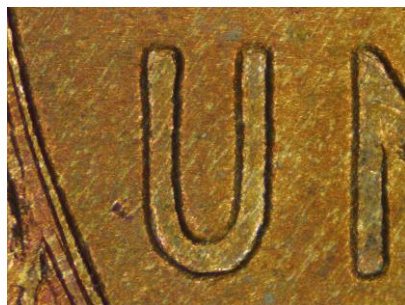
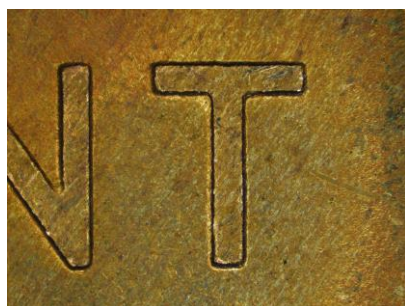
TYPE 2



TYPE 1

CLASS III DDR

TYPE 2



TYPE 1

CLASS III DDR

TYPE 2



TYPE 1



CLASS III DDR



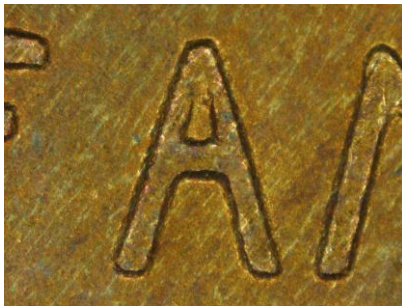
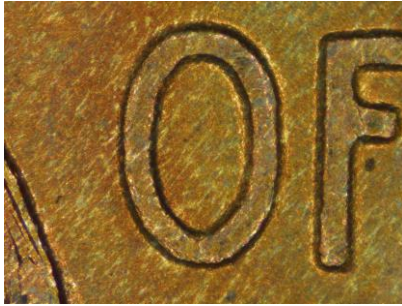
TYPE 2



TYPE 1

CLASS III DDR

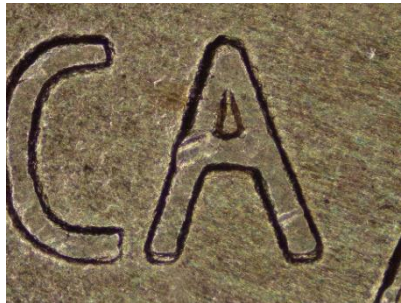
TYPE 2



TYPE 1



CLASS III DDR



TYPE 2





Type 1 T is level with I and E

Type 2 T is higher than I and E



Type 1 E is level with M and R

Type 2 E is lower than M and R

CHAPTER 8

Exploring the 1909 Reverse in 3D

On April 14, 2023, I visited Michigan State University's Center for Advanced Microscopy and met with my technician, Amy Albin. The purpose of the visit was to explore microtomography using a Keyence 2 high powered light microscope. It was my theory that creating a 3D rendering of the reverse would allow me to see differences between the Type One and the Type Two reverses and any changes that may have occurred. Also considered was the Class III VDB reverse. Four coins were chosen for this experiment. Three were from the original bank bag containing the Bloom Hoard consisting of a 1909P VDB Type One (with thicker letters on the reverse), a 1909P VDB Type One (with a reverse that appeared to have been cleaned up and letters made thinner) and a 1909P VDB Type Two. These three samples were selected because they would be expected to be as close to an uncirculated striking of each version available and would, therefore, show the differences as close to mint tolerances as possible. The fourth coin was a 1909P VEDS Class III Doubled Die, selected from my personal collection, to compare any change made from before and after the initials were removed. I also wanted to determine whether any height differences were measurable in the hubbing of one reverse over the other.

Each scan took approximately thirty-five minutes to complete, stitching over three hundred images together to create a three-hundred-and-twenty-megapixel high resolution image. From there I am now able to see the reverse not only in 3D but can make cross-sections of the coin and make measurements as small as one nanometer (planchet thickness,

striking pressure and die wear may contribute to slight variances of these values from one coin to another).

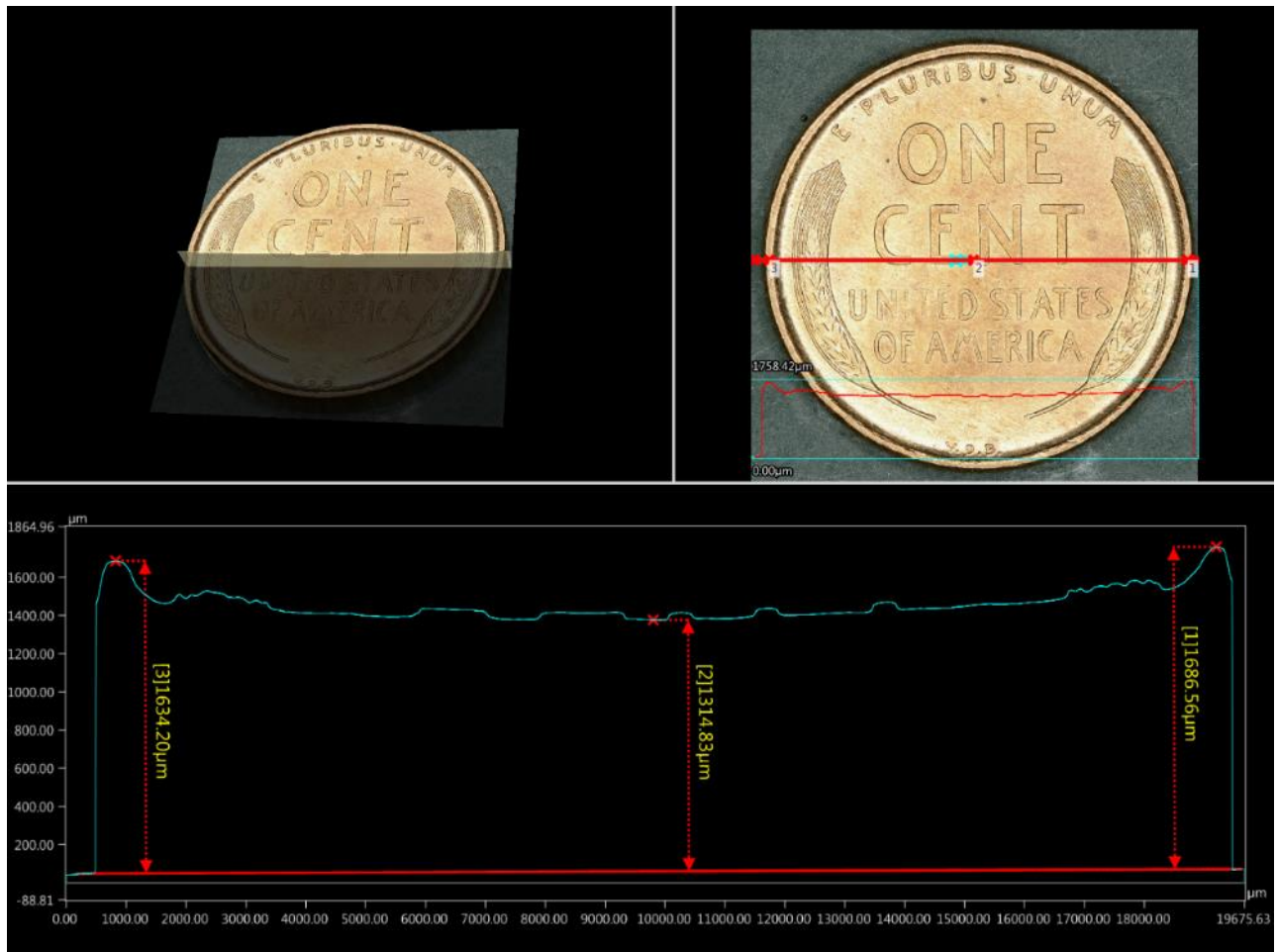
The cross-section occurs in the middle of the reverse image along the bottom of CENT on both versions of the reverse. The center of the coin is where the lowest point in the coin is found (The apex of the convex shape of the die). The sets of images that follow show the results of the scans.



Type One

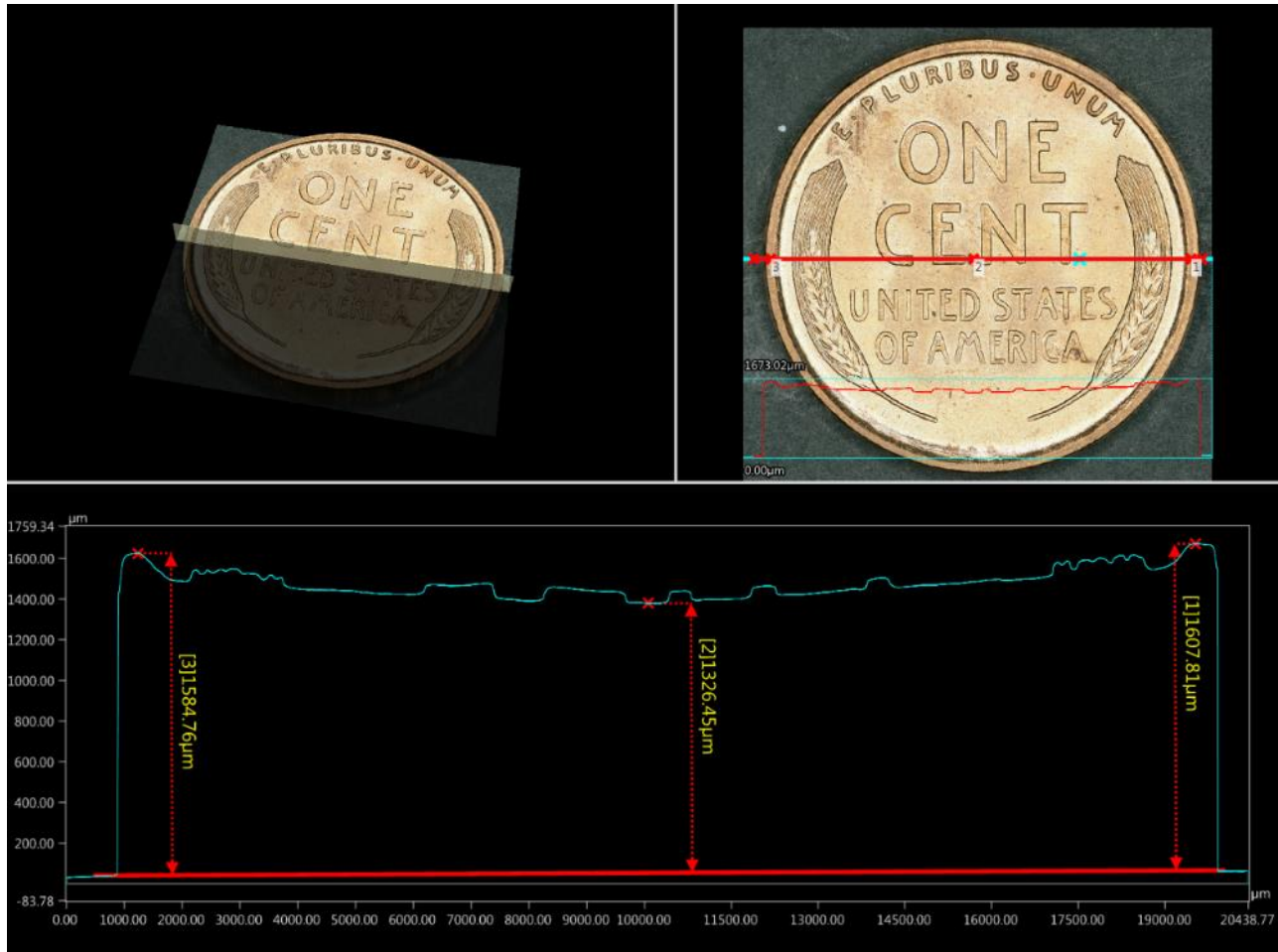
Type Two

We can see in the first image of Type One that the rims are taller and the rise of the letters from the field are close to the field.

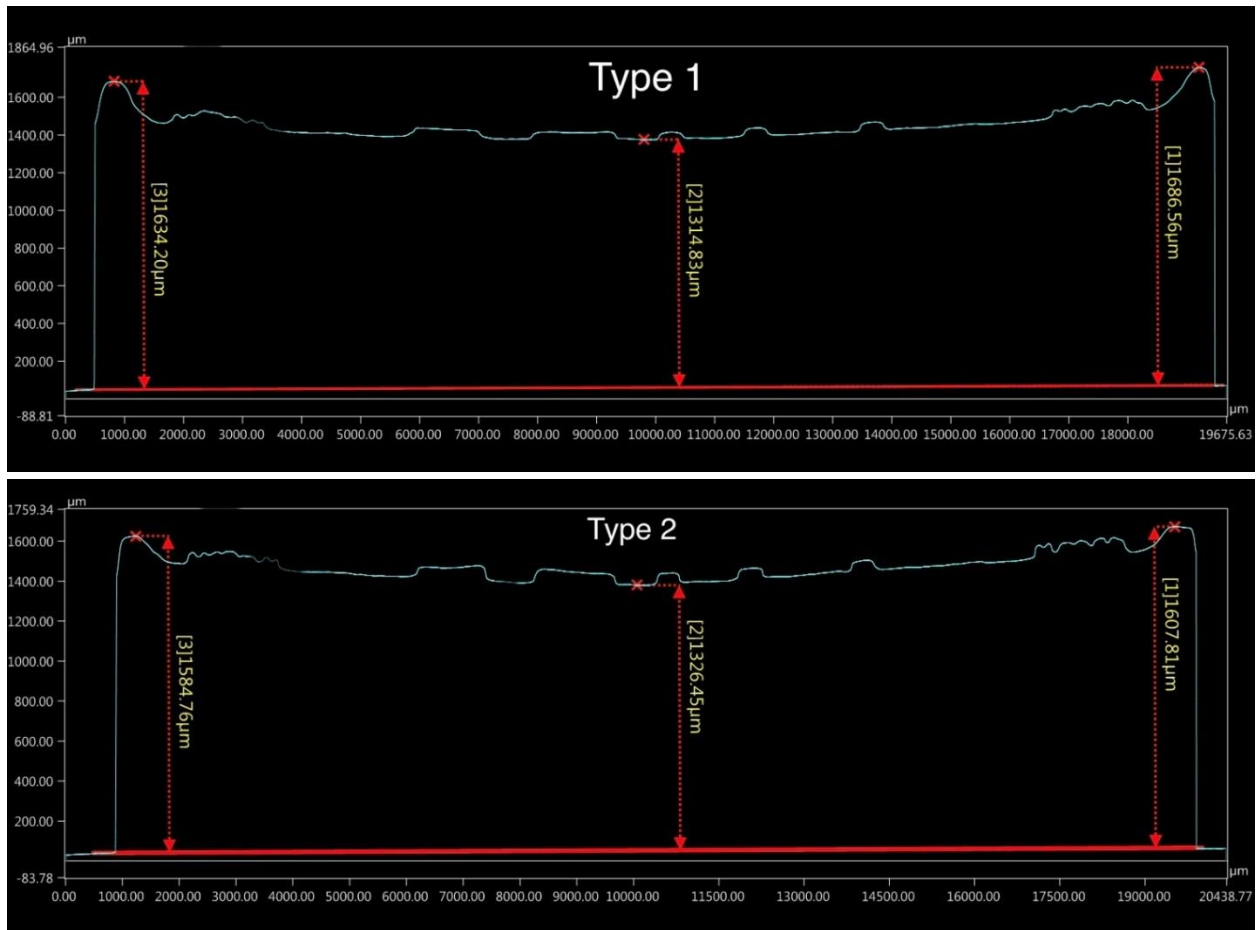


Type One Reverse

In the second image containing the Type Two reverse, we see a change in the rim height (shorter than Type 1), the letters are a higher relief, and the radius is more nearly flat. The comparisons may be more readily visualized with the comparative stacking on page 65.



Type Two Reverse

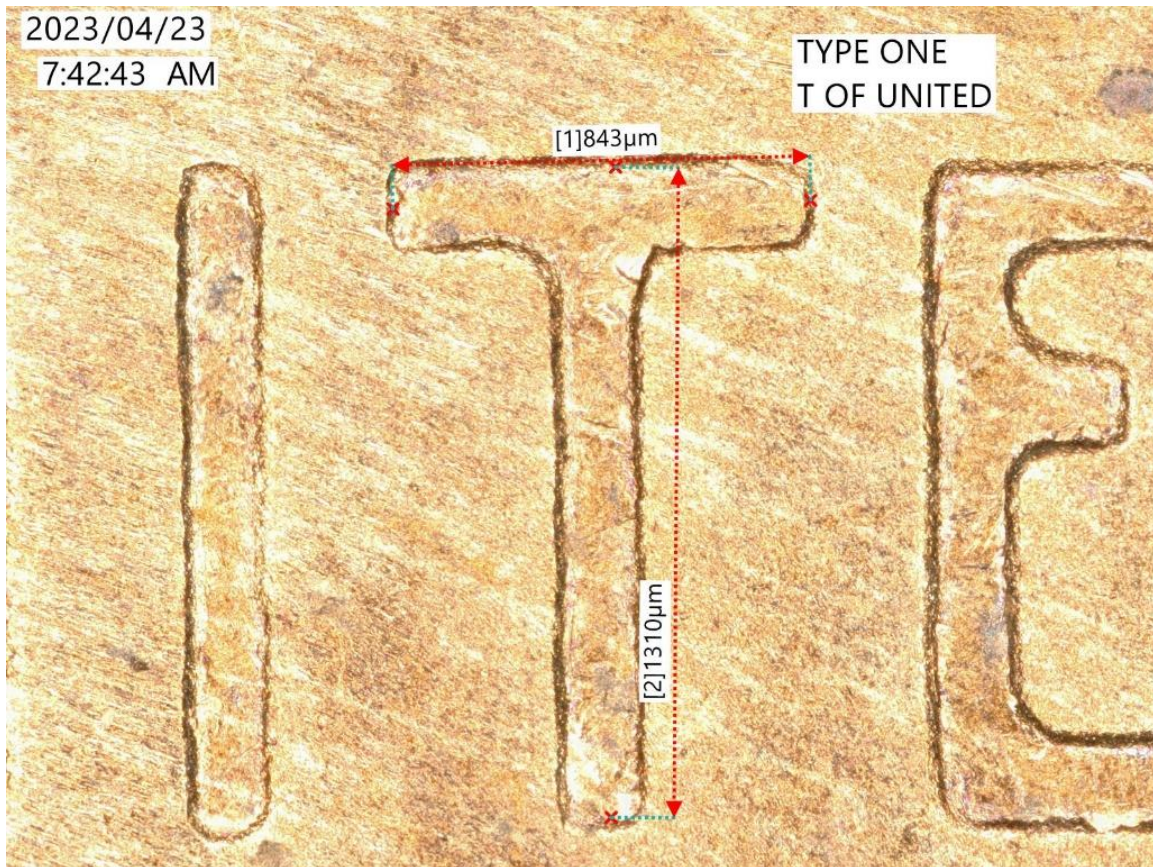


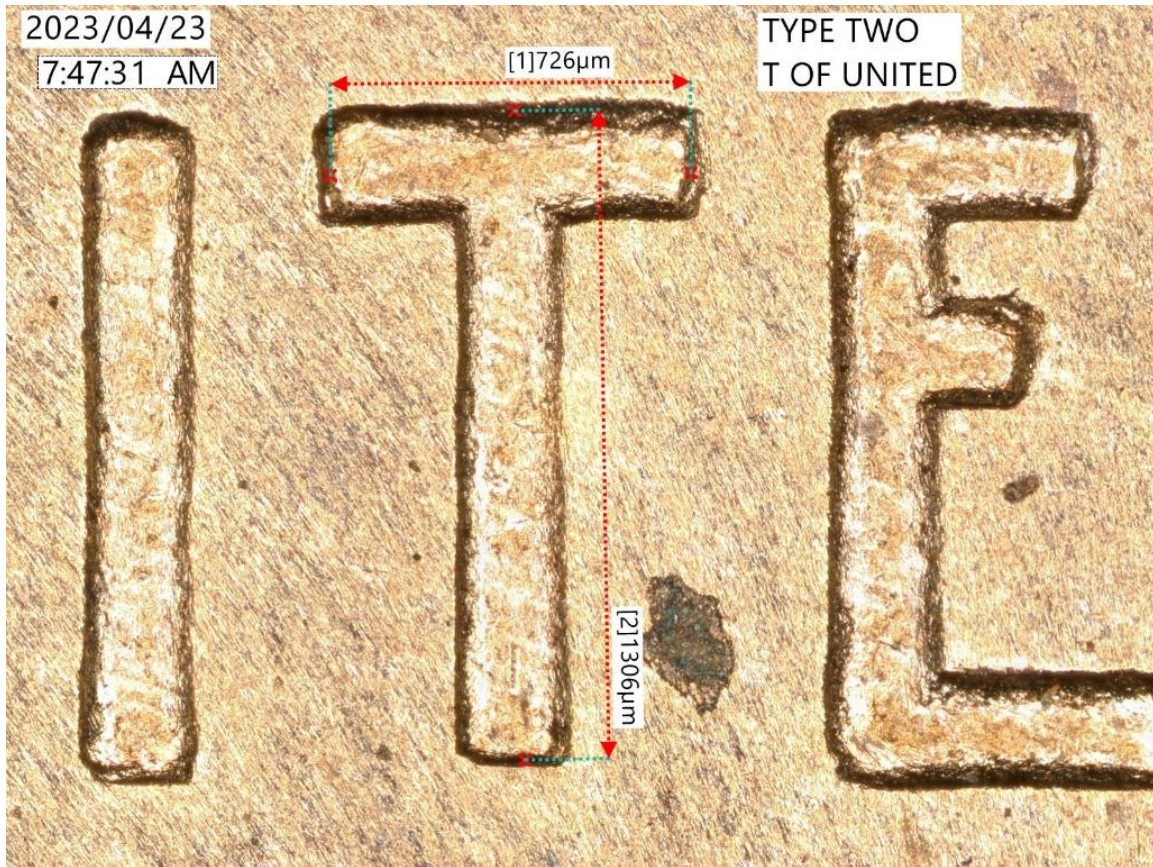
In comparing these stacked images, several differences become apparent:

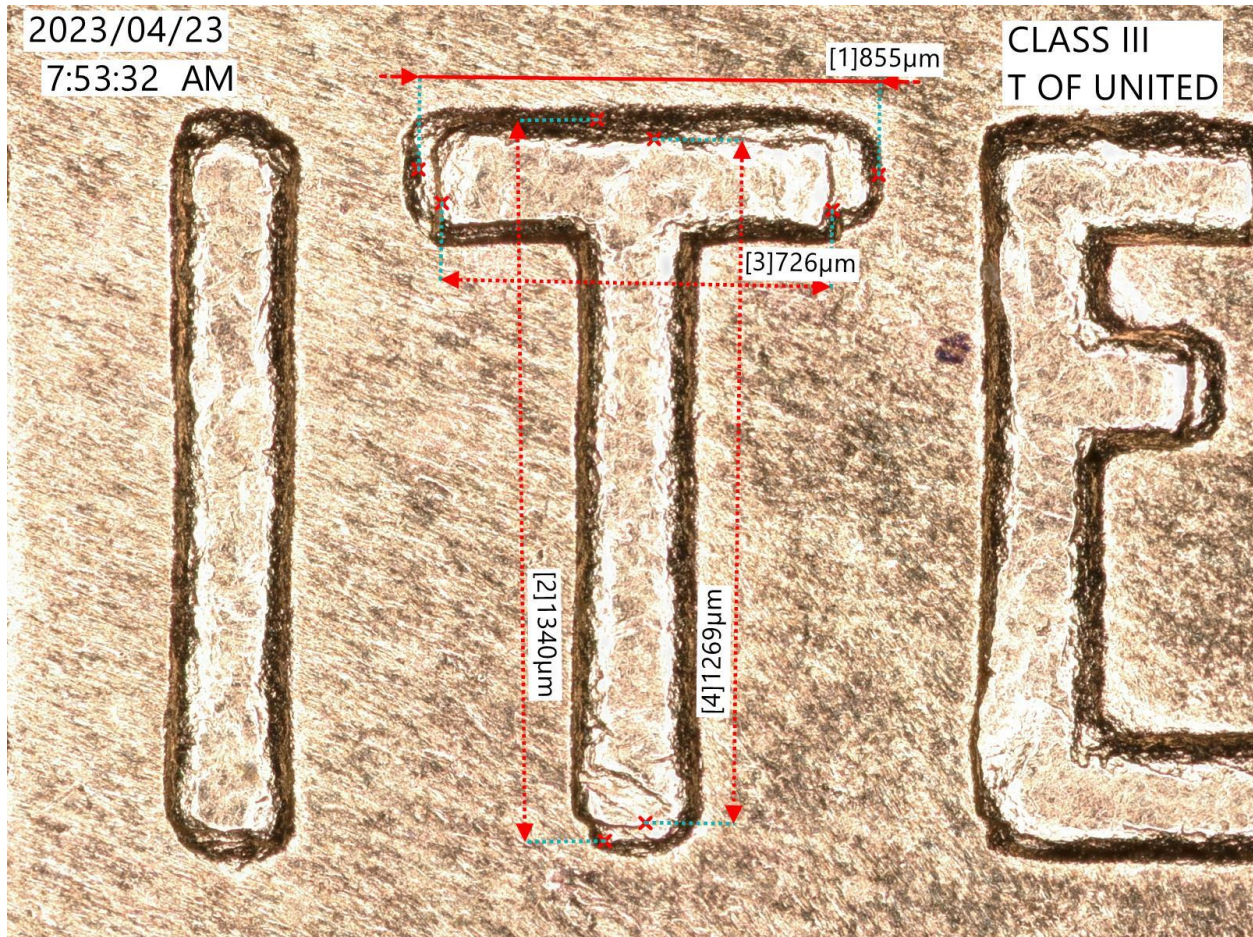
- The rim height of Type Two is shorter than Type One as was visually apparent when we viewed the stacks of cents on Page 28. The higher rims needed cutting down for the minor coinage to work properly in the slot machines where they were being recognized as nickels.
- The letters of Type Two are a higher relief than they are on Type One.
- The radius of Type Two is more nearly flat than on Type One. We know Barber had an issue with the reduction lathe

creating a radius of six and wanted the reverse changed so the radius would be twenty-five like other minor coinage that worked well in the presses in the past. I think the flatter radius of the surface is why so many dies were made during the first year. The flatter the radius the harder the strike would be on the surface, reducing the life of the striking die.

The T in UNITED was measured to verify that it is indeed a match to Type 2 hubbed over Type 1. The program used to accomplish this was the VHX-6000 950F Analyzer software. Measurement units were set to μm .







Measurements [1] and [2] are that of the Type One reverse and measurements [3] and [4] are that of the Type Two reverse. This is another piece of evidence used in determining this is a Class III Doubled Die reverse.

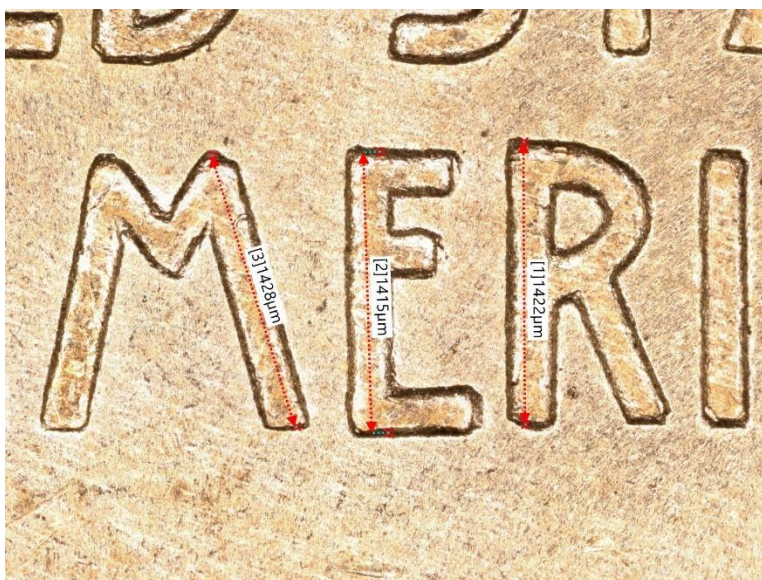
CHAPTER 9

A Closer Look at the Two Galvanos

In true discovery fashion one must try to prove a theory wrong in order to prove it right. The supposition is my claim that two Galvanos were made for the 1909 Lincoln Wheat Cent, but why? There are no images showing a second being made nor is there any mention of a second one existing. Then why are there distinct differences between reverses? Let us break this down into sections. The most noticeable difference is the E in AMERICA. In the Type One reverse the E sits evenly flat at the bottom in line with the M and R. In the Type Two reverse the E sits lower. This also happens to be the version that continues from 1910 to the end of the series in 1958. Below are two images where I measured both versions using a μm scale. Type One and Type Two show that they are completely different. I wanted to determine if the letters beside the E had been cleaned up and shortened. The fact that they have not is an argument supporting the existence of a second Galvano.



Type One Reverse



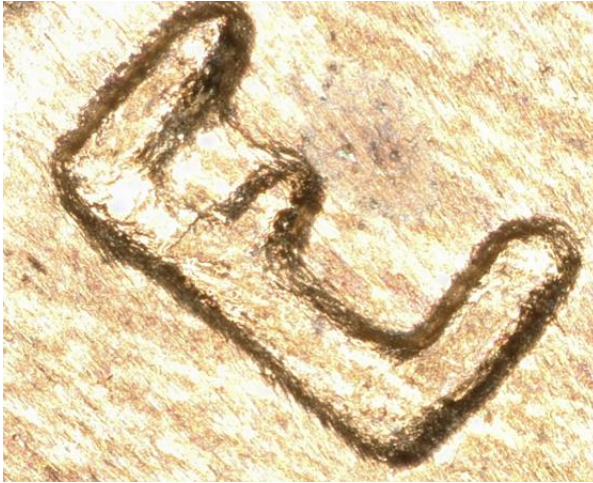
Type Two Reverse

A letter analysis was performed. Blaine Neupert had noticed that some of the Type One reverses showed signs that the letter had been narrowed as if the engravers were trying to fix a production issue. As I mentioned previously, while at MSU, I had both of Blaine's Type One versions scanned along with a Type Two from the Bloom Hoard, and a VEDS (Very Early Die Stage) Class III Doubled Die reverse from my personal collection. Below, are comparison photos of each of the eighteen letters chosen from all four coins.

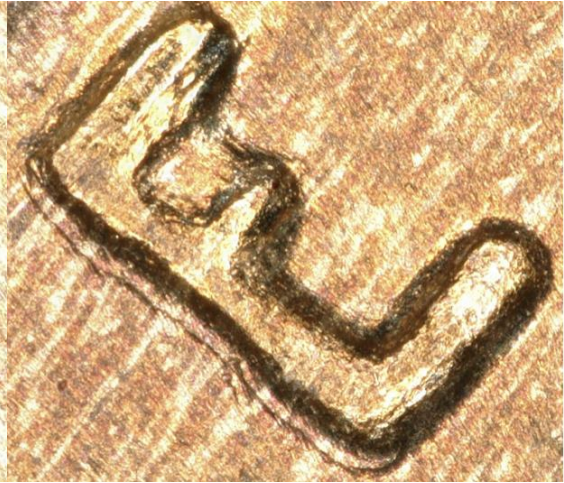
- Notice the thickness of Type one version A when compared to the thinness of Type One version B.
- Notice the differences with Type Two letters: The inside of each R and each A exhibits the addition of material resulting in smaller holes.

These differences can only be explained by the existence of a second Galvano. The Class III Doubled Die photos show that both versions, possibly even a combination of version A or version B, are hubbed with

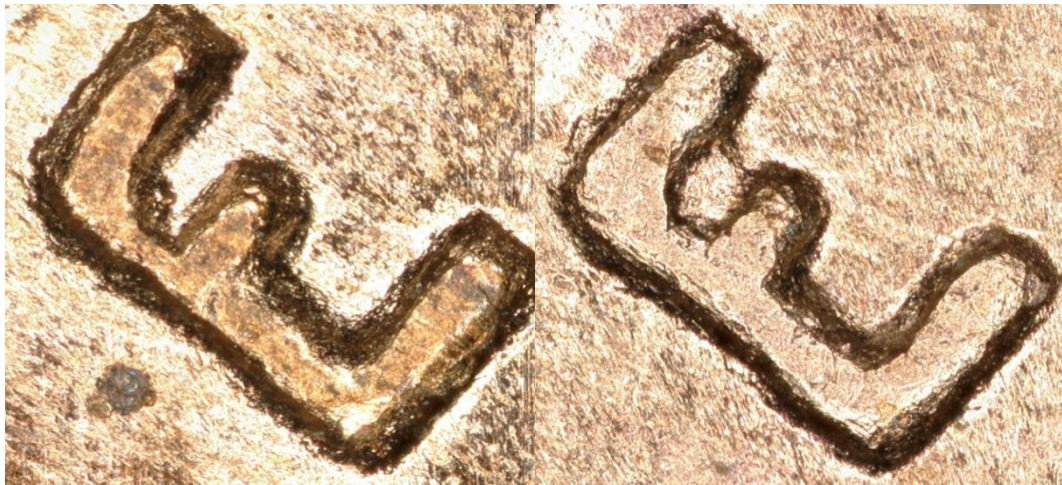
Type 2 over Type 1. I see no sustainable evidence within the two Type One versions to merit any further investigation. While there are a few places where the dies might appear to be trimmed up, those instances are insignificant and would have no bearing on a final attribution.



Type 1 version A



Type 1 version B



Type 2



Class III



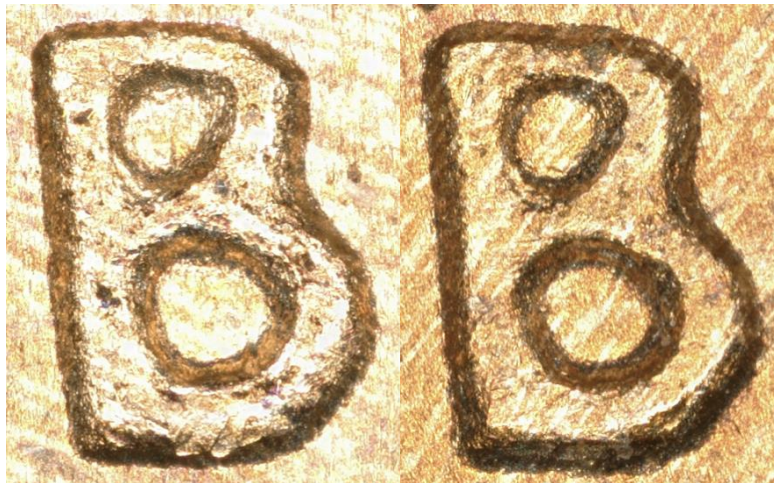
Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



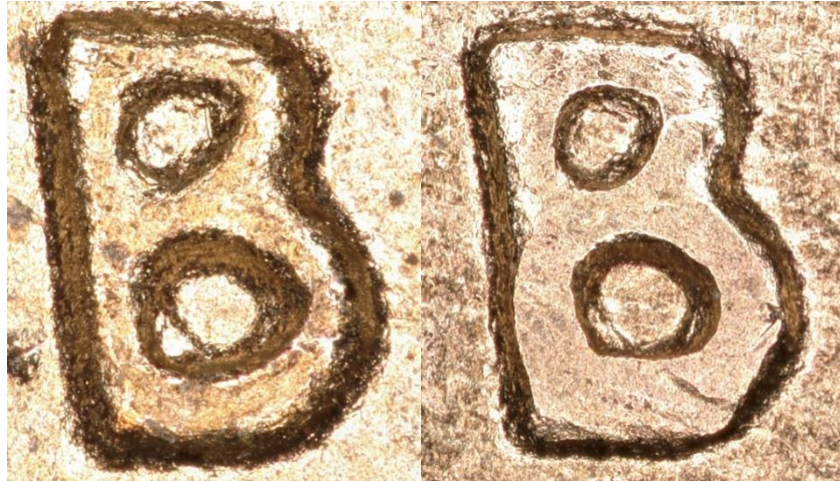
Type 2

Class III



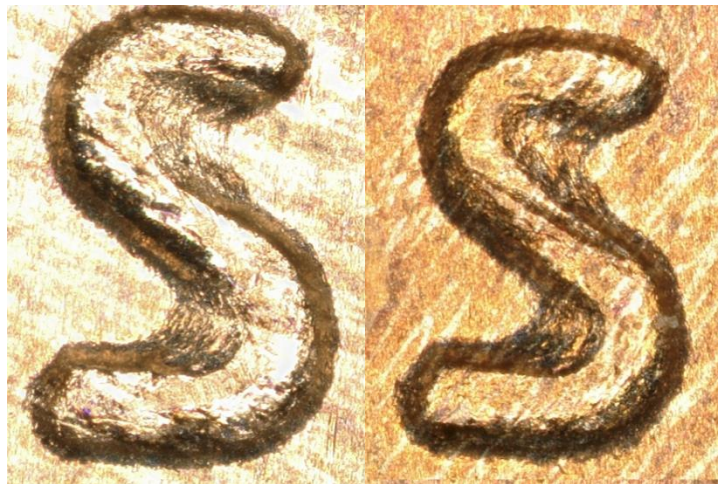
Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



Type 2

Class III



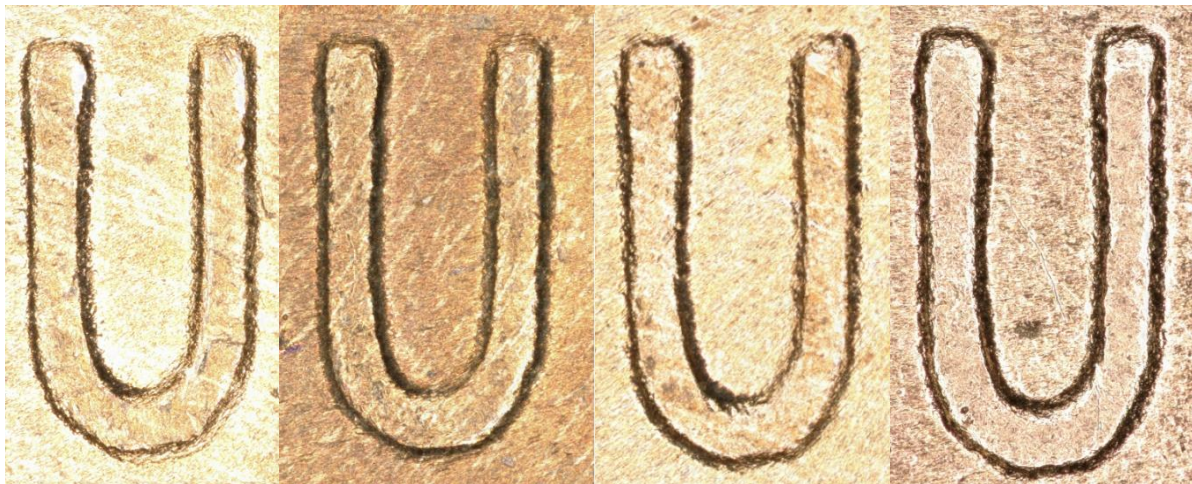
Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



Type 2

Class III

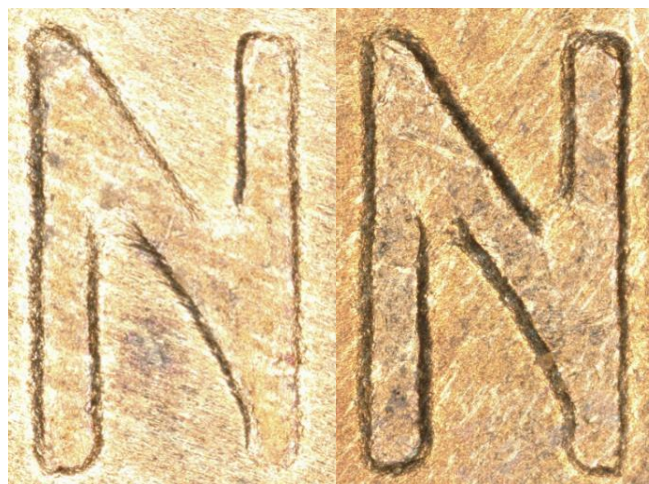


Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B

Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



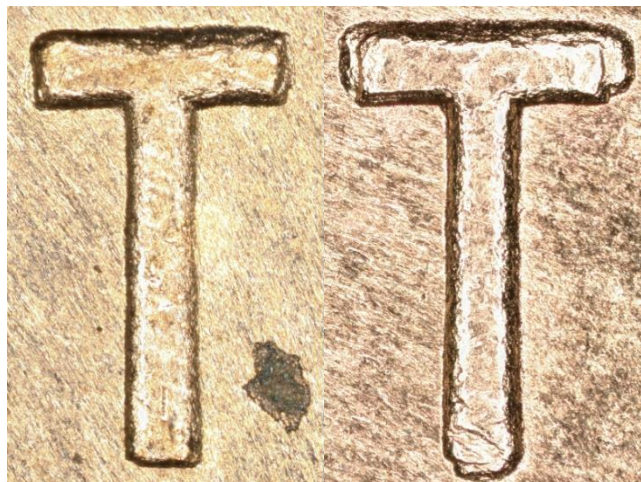
Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



Type 2

Class III

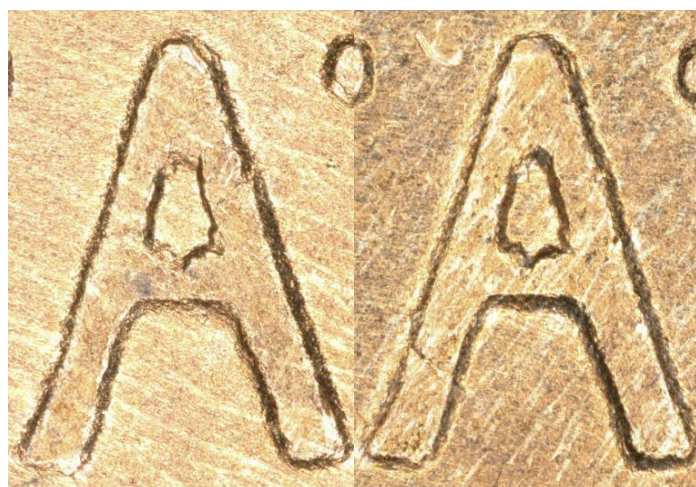


Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B

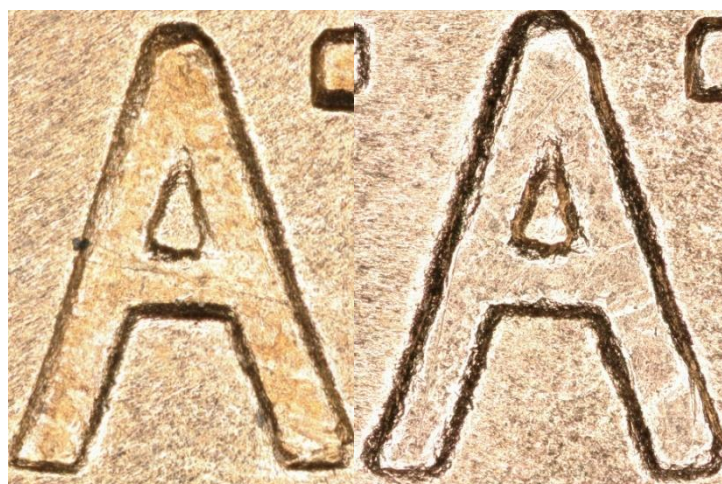
Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



Type 2

Class III

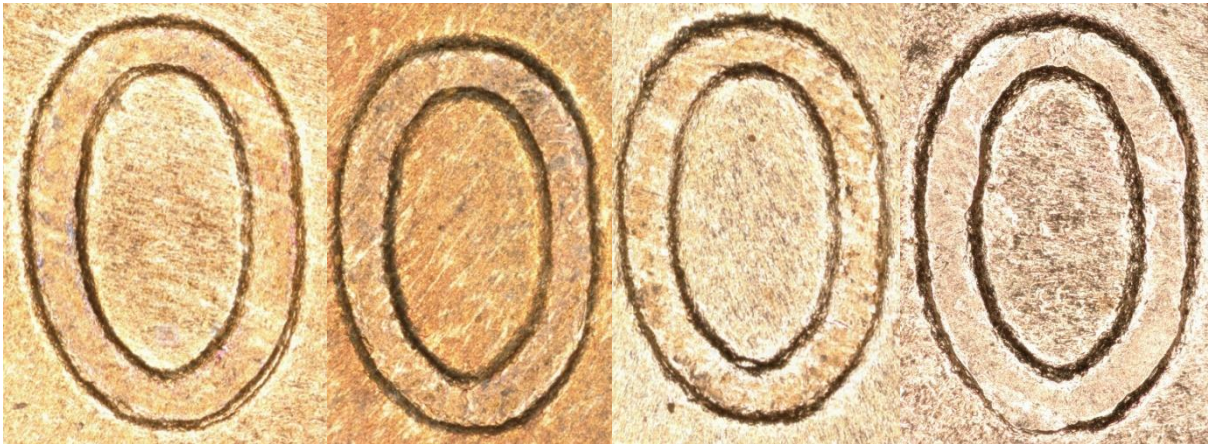


Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B

Type 2

Class III

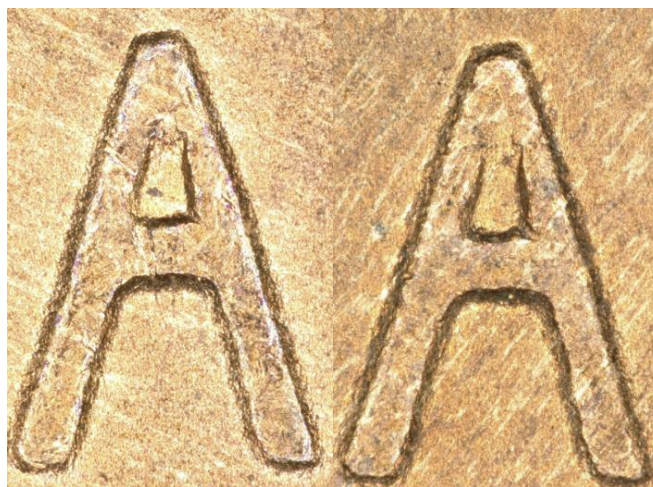


Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B

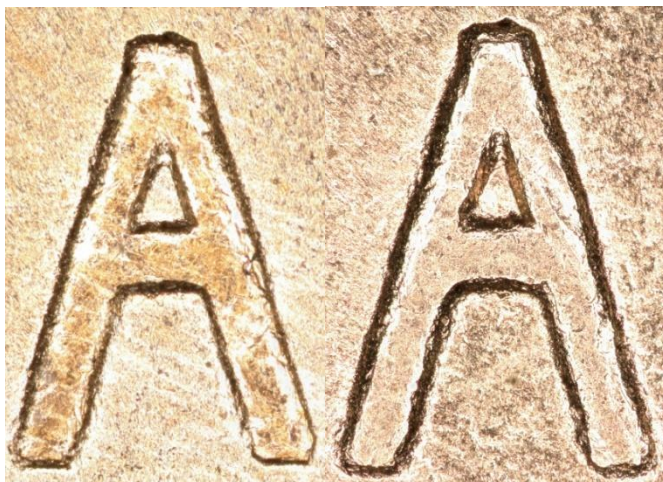
Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



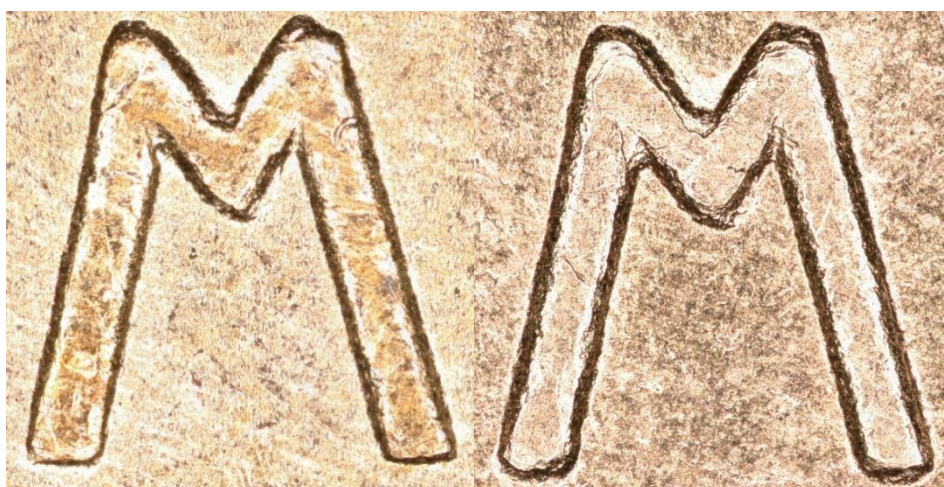
Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B

Type 2

Class III

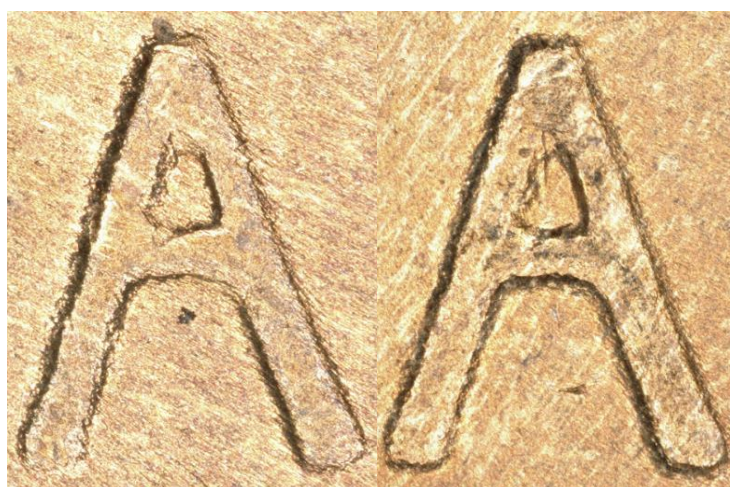


Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B

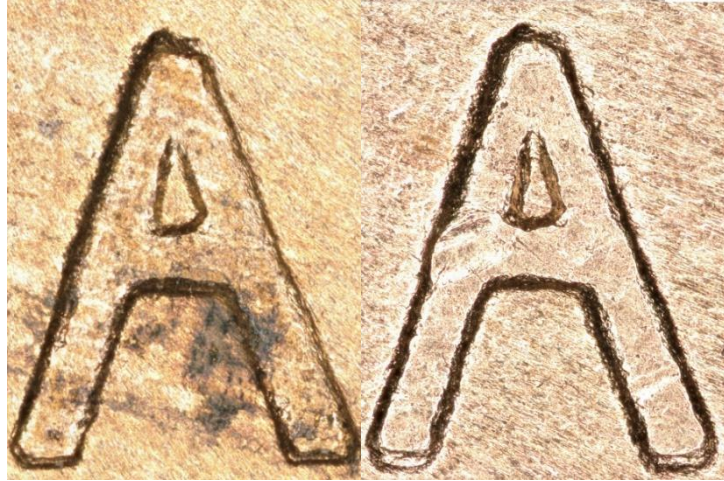
Type 2

Class III



Type 1 version A

Type 1 version B



Type 2

Class III

CHAPTER 10

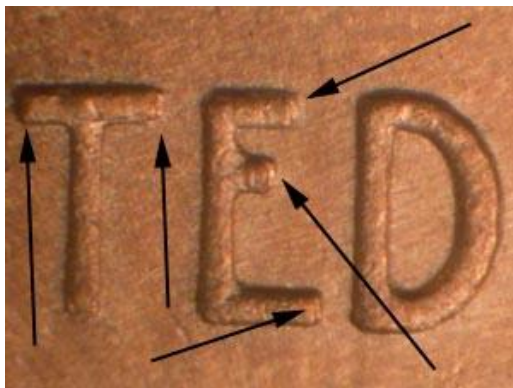
The Many Faces of the 1909 Class III DDR

April 22, 2023 was the day my opinion of the Class III Double Die reverse changed. After weeks of hearing Blaine try to convince us of multiple Class III Doubled Die reverses, I finally sat up and took notice. Sure enough there are distinct differences between the reverses, enough to call them unique and different. The question arises.... how many could there actually be? So, in true rabbit hole fashion I challenge the group to find as many as we can before the book finishes.

Blaine is aware of five currently and possibly a sixth. I imaged all of mine to see what I can find and started a file just for reverse images of TED of UNITED and ME of AMERICA since these will be the easiest to determine a noticeable difference.

Keep in mind that these dies could have all been created in the same time frame but utilized throughout the minting year in no particular order. This makes the question of when the first Class III Doubled Die was produced and how long they stayed in production even more puzzling. We know that they were used before the release date in August 1909 and into the 1910 production run.

On May 1, 2023 Dr. Wiles attributed the Class III Doubled Dies sent in from the Bloom Hoard that created seven new listings for the Class III designation. This is the first of its class category for that year on the Variety Vista site. Below are those results. Images are those of Dr. Wiles and the ones shown in his attributions.



1909 VDDR-013

13-R-III

V.D.B.



1909 VDDR-014

14-R-III

V.D.B.



1909 VDDR-015

15-R-III

V.D.B.



1909 VDDR-016

16-R-III

V.D.B.



1909 VDDR-17

17-R-III



1909 VDDR-018

18-R-III



1909 VDDR-019

19-R-III



1909 VDDR-020

PR-20-R-III

With multiple Doubled Dies discovered there is clear evidence that both working hub reverses were hubbed onto working dies all with slight differences.

In the following weeks since attribution from the Bloom Hoard more Class III's emerged. Not yet pictured on the Variety Vista Page are the following Class III Lincoln Wheat Cents:

1909

VDDR-021, 21-R-III (Jay Painter)

VDDR-022, 22-R-III (Jay Painter)

VDDR-023, 23-R-III (Blaine Neupert)

VDDR-024, 24-R-III (Jay Painter)

VDDR-025, 25-R-III (Jay Painter)

VDDR-026, 26-R-III (Blaine Neupert)

VDDR-027, 27-R-III (Blaine Neupert)

VDDR-028, 28-R-III (Blaine Neupert)

1909 S



VDDR-001, 1-R-III FS-1502



VDDR-002, 2-R-III

CHAPTER 11

A Closer Look at the FS-1102 and Its Stages.

By Jay Painter

The 1909 V.D.B. Lincoln FS-1102 is the variety that sparked my interest in variety coins. I had been a long-time collector since about the age of six or seven. Every year my grandmother would set up a manger display during the holidays, and she always put a bunch of change under the straw/hay. I always helped clean it up and when we were done, I got to keep the change. She always put wheat cents and buffalos in the mix. She also told me about the three-legged buffalo. That was the mid 1980's.

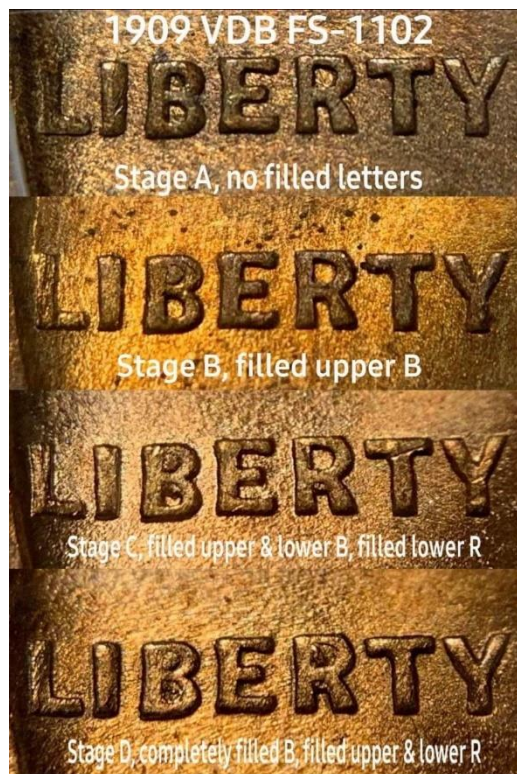
Around 2009 I stumbled onto a 1909 V.D.B. FS-1102 on eBay. I tossed it into my Watched category. There it sat for a few weeks, and with my birthday getting close, my wife surprised me with a gift of that very FS-1102! The one that started the collection was a nice raw example that was a Stage D, which shows the most die markers. It was the beginning of a labor of love of learning, and that I never expected to end up where I am today!



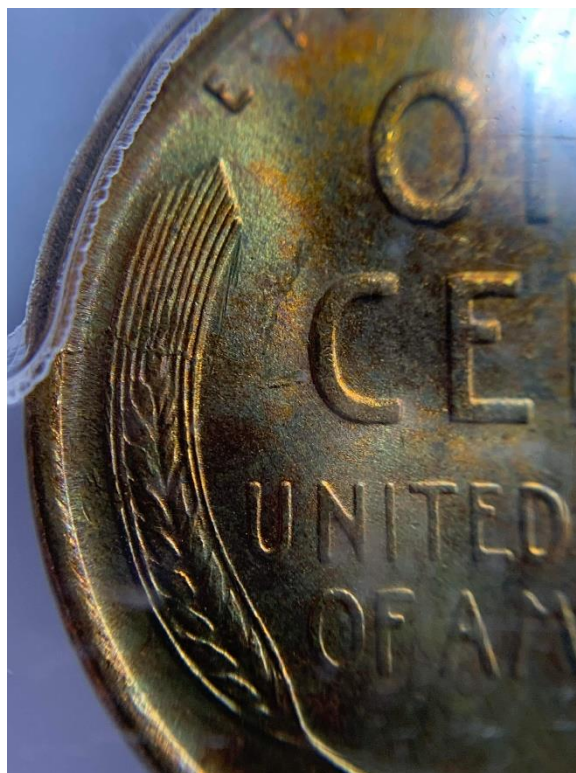
Close up of the FS-1102 date

The FS-1102 is a Cherrypickers Guide listing number, which is a newer number than that seen in the previous editions of Cherrypickers Guide as 012.1 and is still seen listed as such on some older slabs. CONECA has this listed as DDO-002, DoubleDie/Wexler as WDDO-002, Coppercoins as 1DO-002.

When I started collecting, four stages were identified. After collecting a few different stages I decided to try to collect them all. Most examples seen are Stage C and D. After three years of seeing different examples, one showed up that did not match any of them: the die stage markers that were present on Stage C and D were gone. I sent it off to Dr. James Wiles for attribution, and it was attributed as a new Stage E from CONECA. That was February 2012. By February 2013 I had found another progression, Stage F where a die crack develops from the left rim on the reverse.



Images of Stages A thru D



Die Stage F left wheat die crack

The FS-1102 is a Class VI Doubled Die which shows general thickness and distortions in lettering. The date area on the coin shows thickness or spread to the southeast. On a well struck example a parting line runs down the first nine showing this extra thickness. The 0 and the last 9 of the date also spread southeast. The LIBERTY area of the coin shows thickness toward the left edge of the letters. The E in WE shows a little ramping on the bottom, typical with Class VI Lincoln Cents. The letters RU in TRUST show some thickness as well. The front leg of the R is quite thick, as is the bottom edge of the U. This description explains the general DDO. Below are the die Stages and their progressions.

Stage A – A clean die, just a few random die scratches can be identified along with DDO characteristics.

Stage B – The letter B in LIBERTY develops die chips, top full, bottom ½ full.

Stage C – Additional die chips in the lower R in LIBERTY, die Clash under chin and on the reverse connecting C From CENT down to the N in UNITED.

Stage D – A die chip in the shape of a piece of pie fills in the Upper R in LIBERTY, both clashes from Stage C present.

Stage E – The die clash on the reverse gets polished away, die Wear becoming evident.

Stage F – A die crack develops through the upper left wheat from the left rim. More die wear showing.



A full collection of Stages A thru F owned by Jay Painter

Chapter 12

History of the Bloom Hoard

By Blaine Neupert

HARRY BLOOM AND THE STORY OF HIS PURCHASE

(as told by his grandson Ethan)



“My grandfather, Harry Bloom, the second youngest of the Bloom Brothers, immigrated to America from Lithuania in 1899 at the age of 17. He arrived in Boston on the S.S. Amsterdam from Vilkija, Lithuania, via Rotterdam with his mother Meta, father Morris and the youngest brother Nathan. They then traveled to South Central Pennsylvania to join family members Benjamin Bloom and their uncle Simon Conn, Meta’s brother. After peddling goods

from farm to farm since the mid-1880s Benjamin and Simon founded The Old Reliable Dry Goods Store and opened the first location in downtown Chambersburg, Pa. in 1897.

By 1900 the extended Bloom and Conn families had arrived in the area and the partnership was dissolved and each family would start their own companies.

The oldest brother Benjamin and the next oldest, Isaac H. Bloom, opened the first Bloom Brothers store at 83 South Main St. in Chambersburg on March 10, 1900. Brother Eli F. Bloom was treasurer of the firm and managed the company's finances from an office overlooking the main Chambersburg selling floor. Harry Bloom, now the youngest, learned the business as a clerk at the Waynesboro store. Later he became the company's sales manager after learning the business under Isaac.

Bloom Brothers Department Store Building in 1908
83 South Main Street
Chambersburg



My grandfather had quite a few coins in a safety deposit box at his bank. I was nine or ten years old, and this was when I begin my fifty-year hobby collecting coins. I started with a Lincoln Penny book and my grandfather, and I searched and filled the book together. I do not remember

exactly when but having only a few empty slots in the book we went to the bank and to his safety deposit box where he had a canvas bag of multiple rolls of pennies. He opened one roll and with his handkerchief carefully removed a glossy copper coin. With all the gold and silver coins, I had no idea what the point of was having all these pennies. He held the coin for me to look at closely he showed me the reverse and asked if there was anything I hadn't seen before. I had no idea, so he showed me the VDB, the designer's initials stamped on the coin. He really did not

AUGUST 6, 1909.

Lincoln Cents To Be Changed

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5.—Secretary of the Treasury MacVeagh announced today that the initials of the designer on the new Lincoln pennies are to be removed.

The Secretary said none of the pennies issued would be recalled and the minting of the pennies would not be

know if they had any value, but when Americans reading in national and

local newspapers heard that the coin might be discontinued, they waited in long lines to get the pennies. My grandfather read three papers a week, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Chambersburg Public Opinion and The Yiddish Daily Forward. I'm sure with his reading he came across the articles about the VDB and went to a local bank and got everything he could. He kept them for what was then almost fifty years He never said why although by then they were gaining some value. As to how got I got possession of them, I do not believe anyone else in the family knew about them and I was the only one who collected coins. When they were given to me in the 1960's they had begun to appreciate, and I did believe they were worth collecting."

THE STORY BEHIND THE PURCHASE

Early in the spring of 2018 I stumbled on a listing for a 1909 VDB Lincoln cent on eBay. The listing mentioned that the coin was from an original mint bag that the seller's grandfather had purchased. I was curious so I immediately sent the seller a message asking how many of the coins they had left to sell. I was very skeptical as most would be with this type of listing. When he responded to my message that he had only sold 2 coins and had several rolls left, I just about fell over.

I collect BU rolls. I have for 30 years. My passion is the Lincoln wheat cent series. When I discovered that he had several rolls of these available I immediately messaged him back and broke a few eBay rules to get him my email and cell phone number. We connected, and I discovered that he was located just outside of Chicago. A mere 90 minutes from my house. I planned to go visit and see just what he had.

When I arrived I was stunned to hear the history of how the coins had been purchased. Over the next several hours Ethan, the eBay seller, told me the story of his grandfather Harry Bloom and all about the chain of department stores he and his brothers owned and operated on the east coast. The main location was in a town called Chambersburg Pennsylvania, a town about 100 miles from the Philadelphia mint.

He explained to me how on several occasions his grandfather had discussed these coins that were in the family's safe deposit box at the bank. His grandfather also told him about the reason why he went to the bank to make the purchase. It was early August 1909 when Harry read an article in the local newspaper about the initials on the coin being removed and the coins being limited to availability to the public. Harry then went straight to the bank the next day and was able to purchase five dollars (10 rolls) of these coins. The bank President was a close friend of his and not only sold him the five dollars' worth, but he also gave him the original US Mint bag that these coins came in. That bag, along with the 500 coins that were purchased were immediately put into a safe deposit box at the bank. This is where they stayed for over a century. Ethan originally took possession of the coins in the 1960's but the coins remained in the safe deposit box in Pennsylvania.

On my first trip to see Ethan, I was only able to buy 3 of the rolls. He was reluctant to sell them all to me as they had been a part of his family for over 100 years. I completely understood and I think it was when he found out that I had no intentions of just selling these coins off that he warmed up to me being the new owner. It was not until the second trip to see Ethan that I learned of the original Mint bag.



I got a call from Ethan in May of 2018 saying that he had located a few more rolls and thought that I would be a good fit for them as the new owner. So I planned to visit again but this time I brought my son with me. I wanted him to learn and see the history of this story. After all, these rolls would be passed to him and his sister. It was on this second trip that Ethan pulled out the “cherry” on top. The 100% original US Mint bag that the coins came in. I was in shock. Ethan explained that at some point the coins were put into paper wrappers but still resided in the bag and inside the safe deposit box. I simply had to own the bag that the coins had resided in for so many years. It took some convincing and a few back-and-forth negotiations before we agreed on a fair price. My thought was that this collection of coins had very little impact or meaning without this bag and I wanted the collection to stay as original as possible.



227 of the 332 coins that are still raw along
with the original mint bag

When all was said and done, I had walked away with 332 coins from the bag and the bag itself. Ethan still has about half a roll and there are two rolls that reside with other family members that will not be available for purchase at this time. There is a standing offer and a gentlemen’s agreement that should they ever decide to sell the rolls that I be given



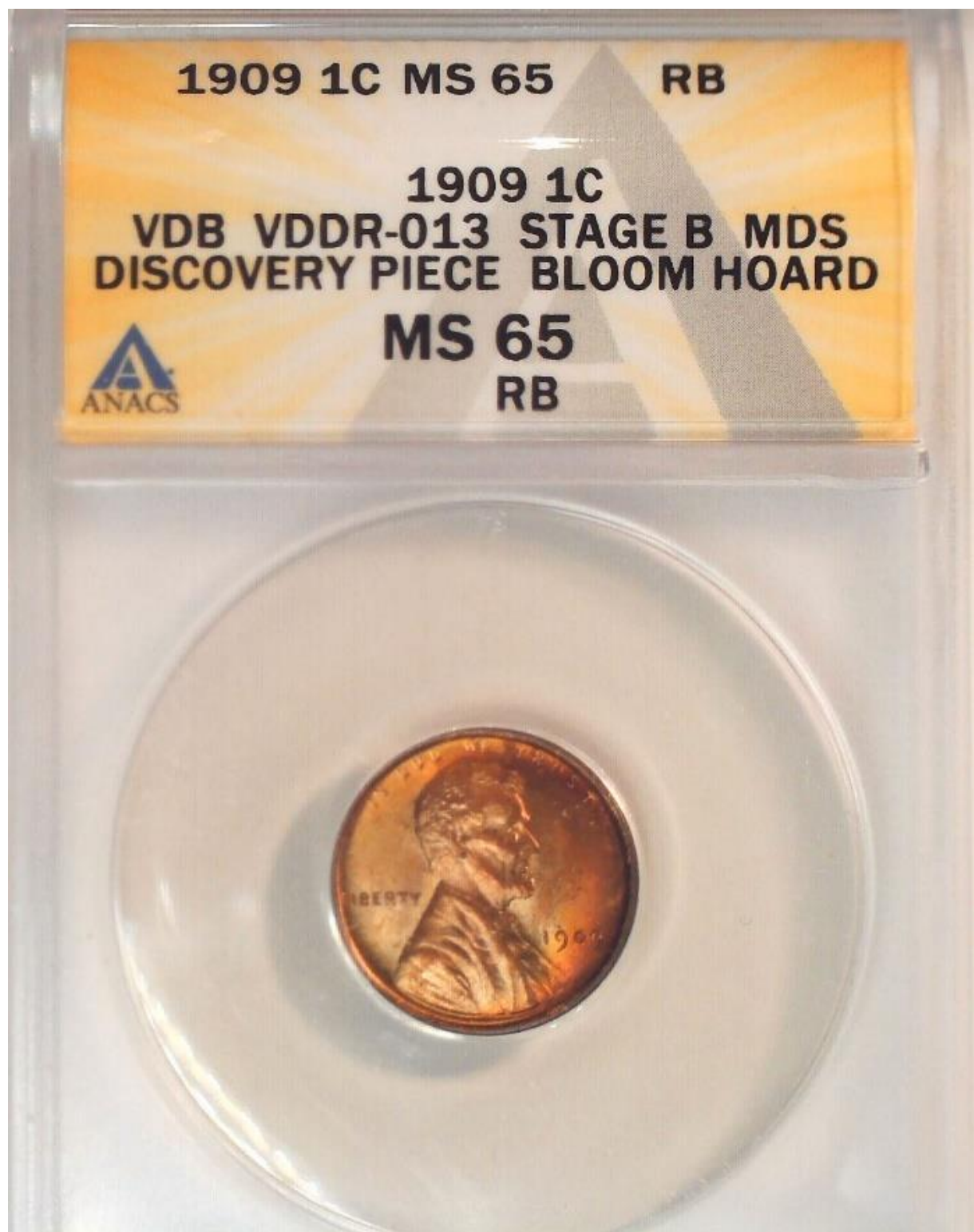
the first opportunity to make a purchase. Ethan believes that a few of his family members may have sold off a few of the coins from the original 500 coins that existed over the years. But overall, I believe that 332 original coins is still an unbelievable number of coins

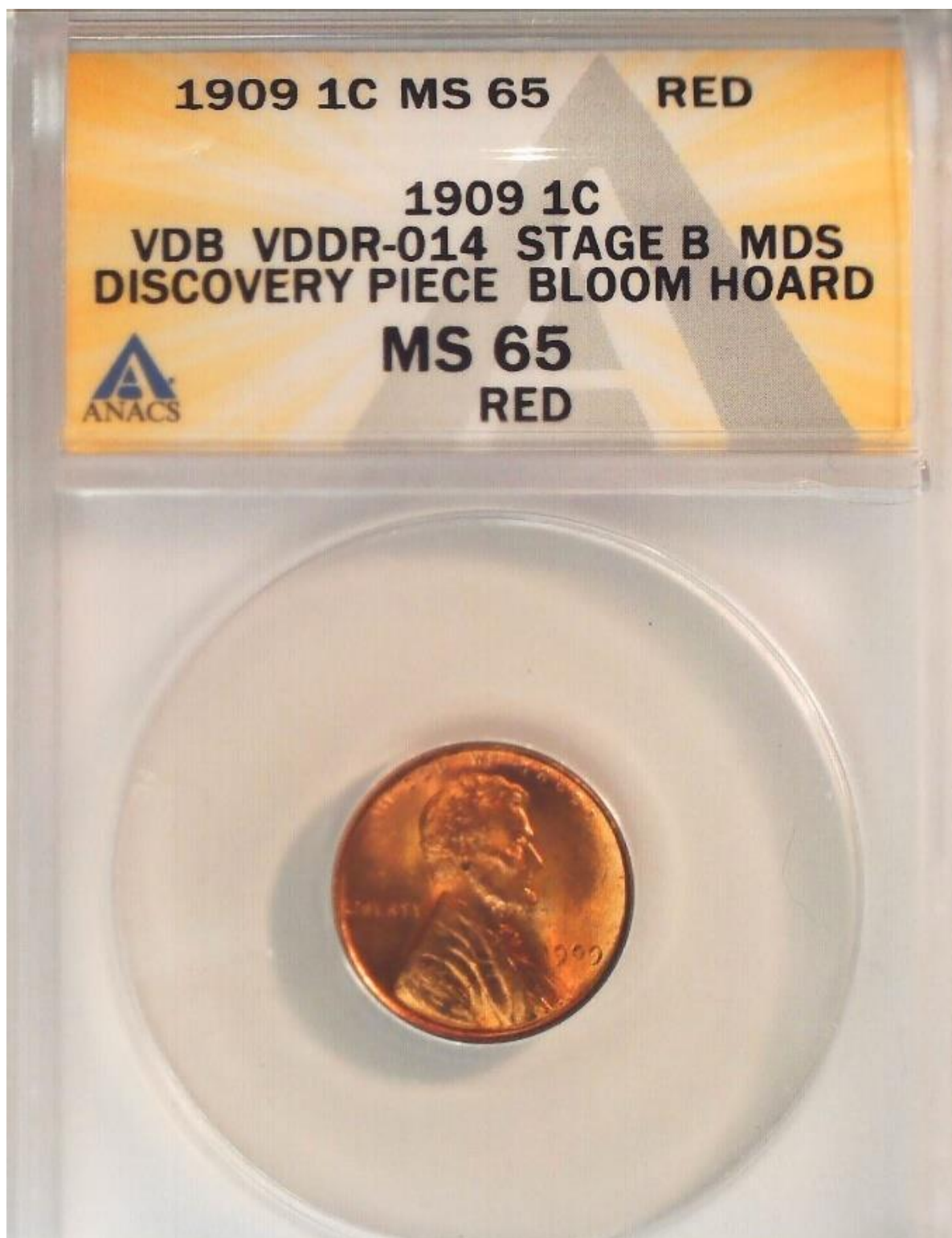
to survive 114 years together from the Philadelphia mint to an avid collector's hands such as mine.

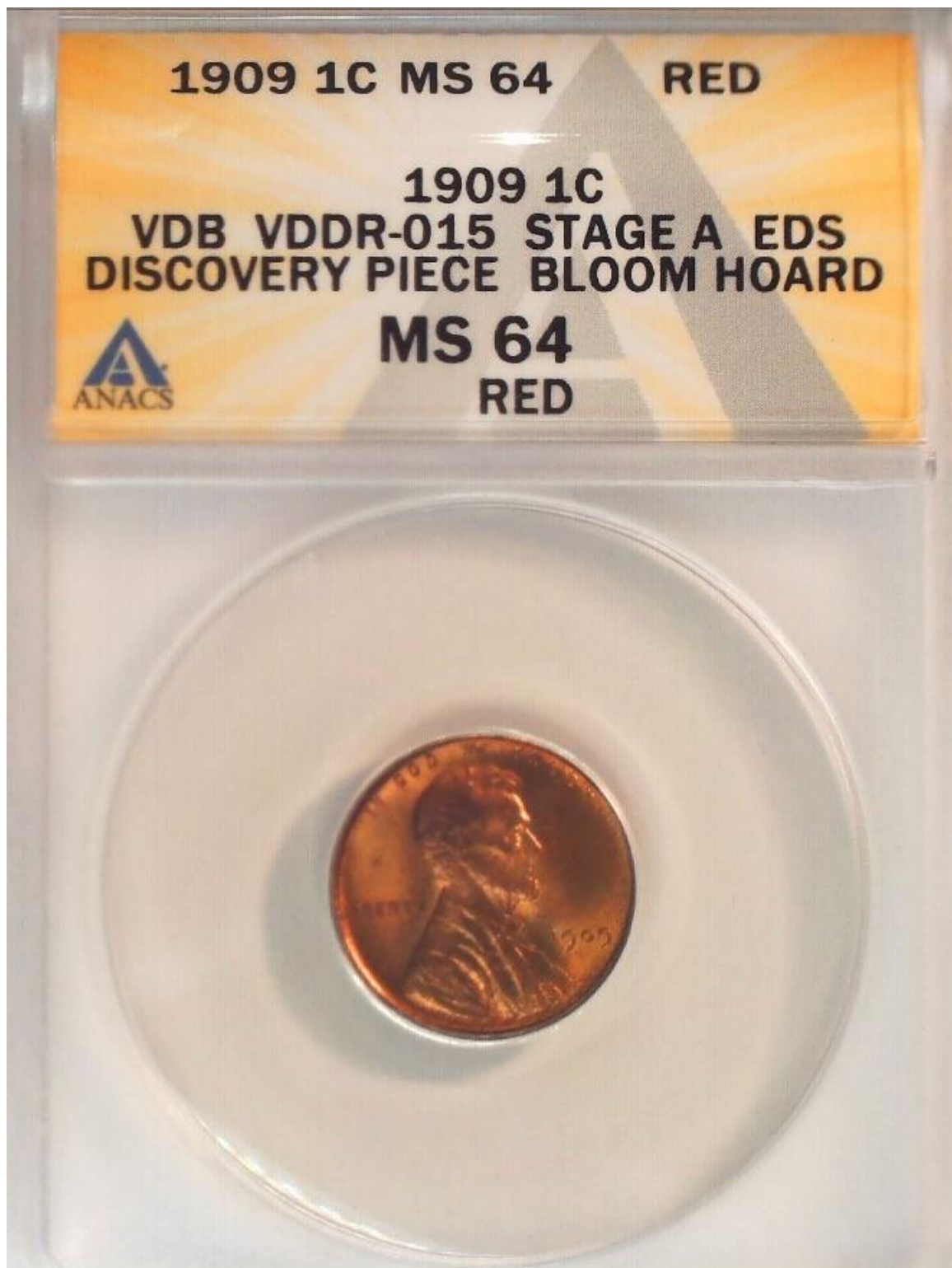
Chapter 13

History Being Made

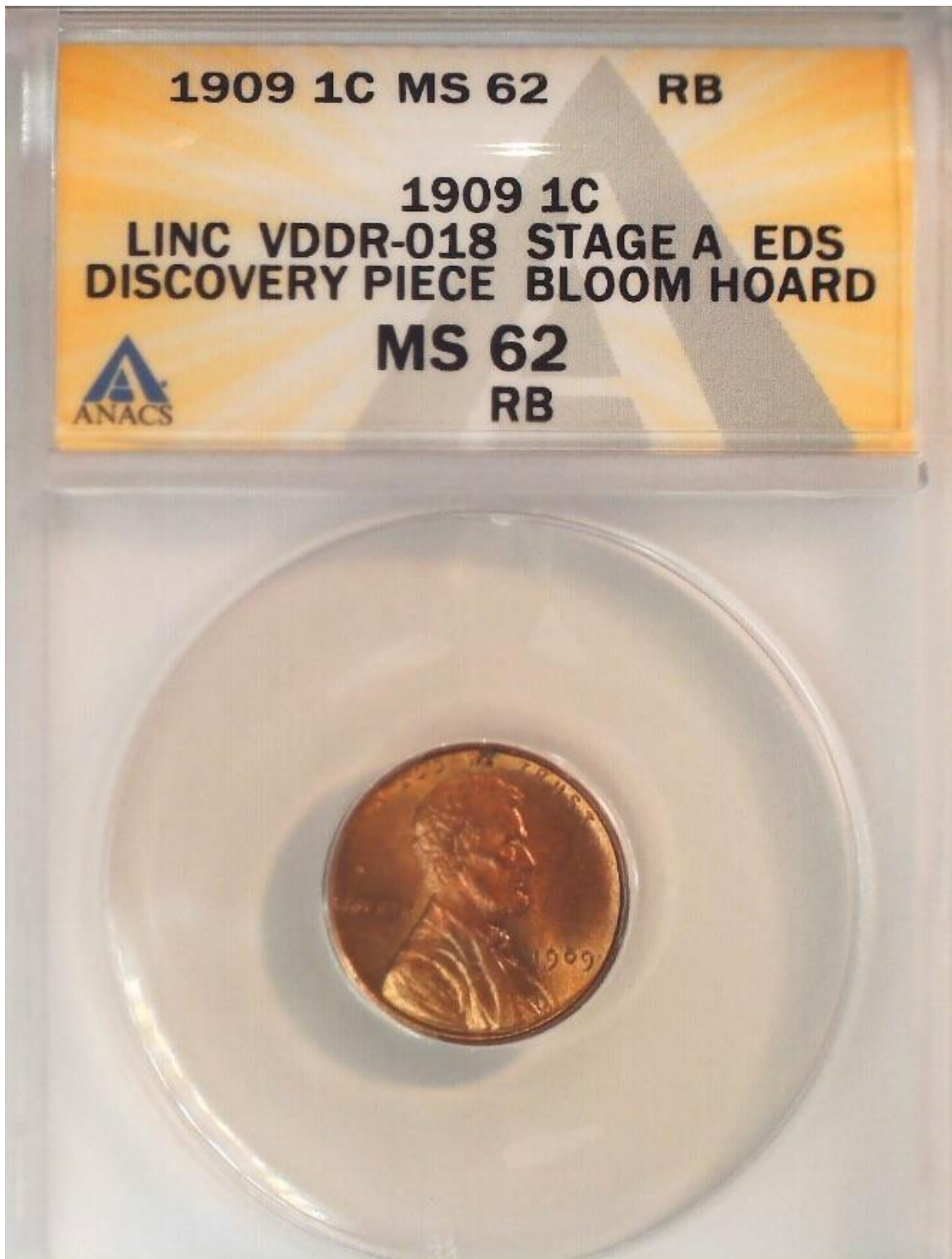
With the results in from Dr. Wiles, the three top Third Party Graders were contacted for grading, imaging, and capsulation. We were looking for one company to encapsulate the findings exclusively. NGC was chosen for the newly listed 1910 reverse 1909 VDDR-001, 1-R-III Transitional Reverse. For the seven new 1909 Class III Doubled Die Reverses, ANACS was chosen. Of the seven new Class III Doubled Die reverses, eight additional new listings fell under die stages of their primary attributions. In total twenty six new Class III DDR's and one 1910 reverse of 1909 Class III DDR emerged as of this publication. Shown are the main seven new Class III doubled Die reverses followed by the 1910 reverse 1909 VDDR-001, 1-R-III Transitional Reverse Discovery Coin and the additional four of the ten known examples.



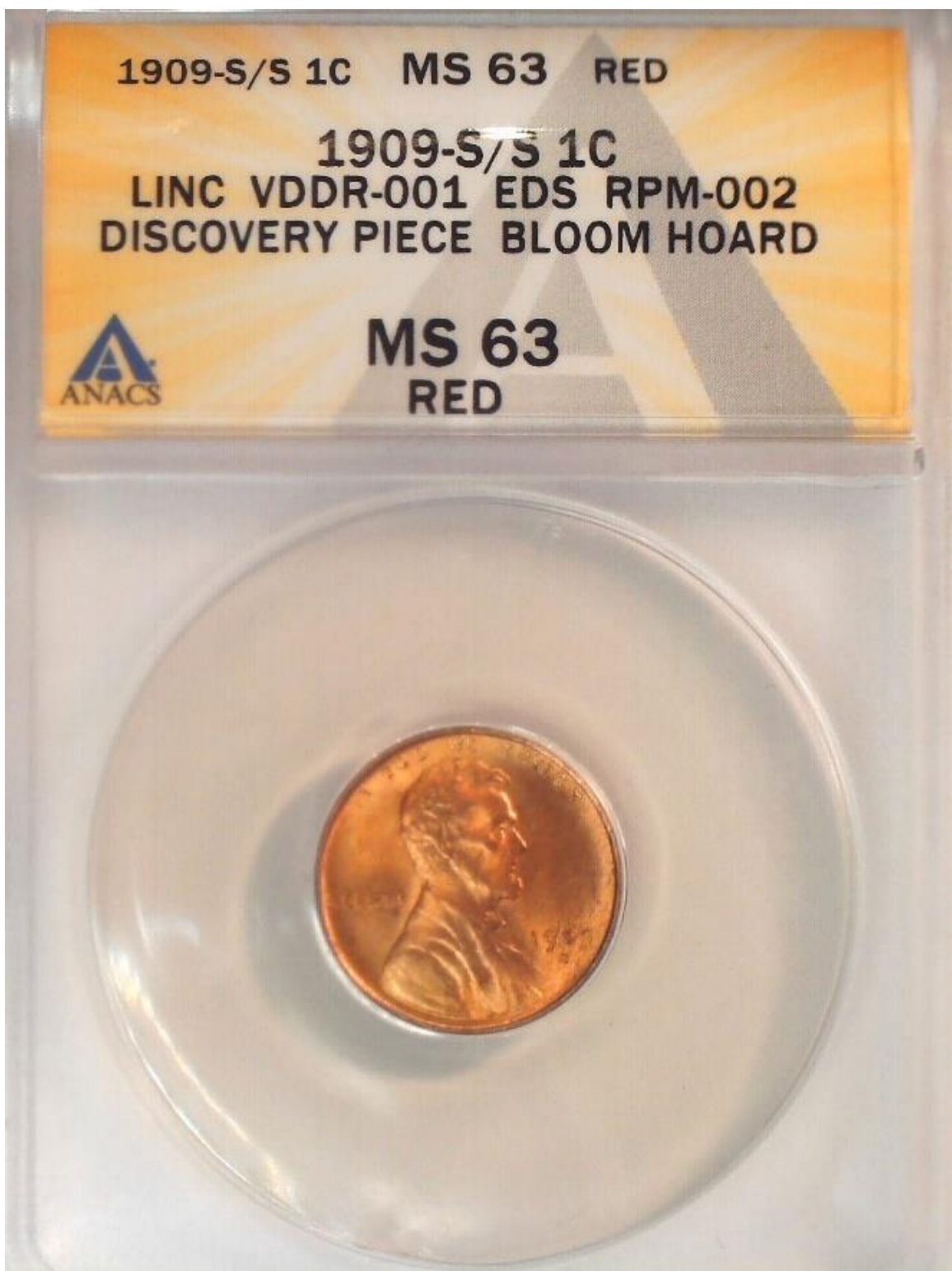






















CONCLUSION

The phone call that started The Rabbit Hole was made January 8, 2023, between Chris Welch and me. We discussed that night many things: from speculations about what had occurred during the 1909 transition year to observations about the exact design of the reverse.

On April 29, 2023, an email was received from Dr. Wiles stating that he had finished with his examination and posted his findings. The coins were returned on May 1, 2023, and emails were sent out that night requesting a partnership with a grading service. On May 2, 2023, we received word that NGC would like to be the exclusive grader.

Ironically the Lincoln Wheat cent began in 1909, 114 years ago and from the first phone conversation to the day they would be officially recognized by a third-party grader, 114 days had passed. In keeping with that theme, this book finished with 114 pages cover to cover and was released on August 2, 2023, the day the Lincoln Wheat Cent was released to the public, 114 years later.

We started with the same information known by everyone in numismatics and thought we had found something new and previously unrecognized, only to be told that we had found nothing new. We ended with having twenty-six new Class III DDRs, all attributed in less than seven months. It has been a life changing accomplishment.

On May 26, 2023 Greysheet.com announced the 2023 Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society (EPNNEs) Newman Grants. I was one of five to receive a grant to help fund this research.

What other discoveries are out there just waiting for someone like you to pick up and examine, question, and explore? Amateur and

professional numismatists alike have a chance at finding the next big discovery and igniting the passion of another collector to enter.....

..... ***The Rabbit Hole***

